MAY 1988

COMMODORE USER

No1 For AMIGA GAMES

£1.10

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WE GRAB BIONIC COMMANDOS

PIRACY ON TRIAL

HOT REVIEWS: GUTZ

CYBERNOID, KARNOV

ALIEN SYNDROME

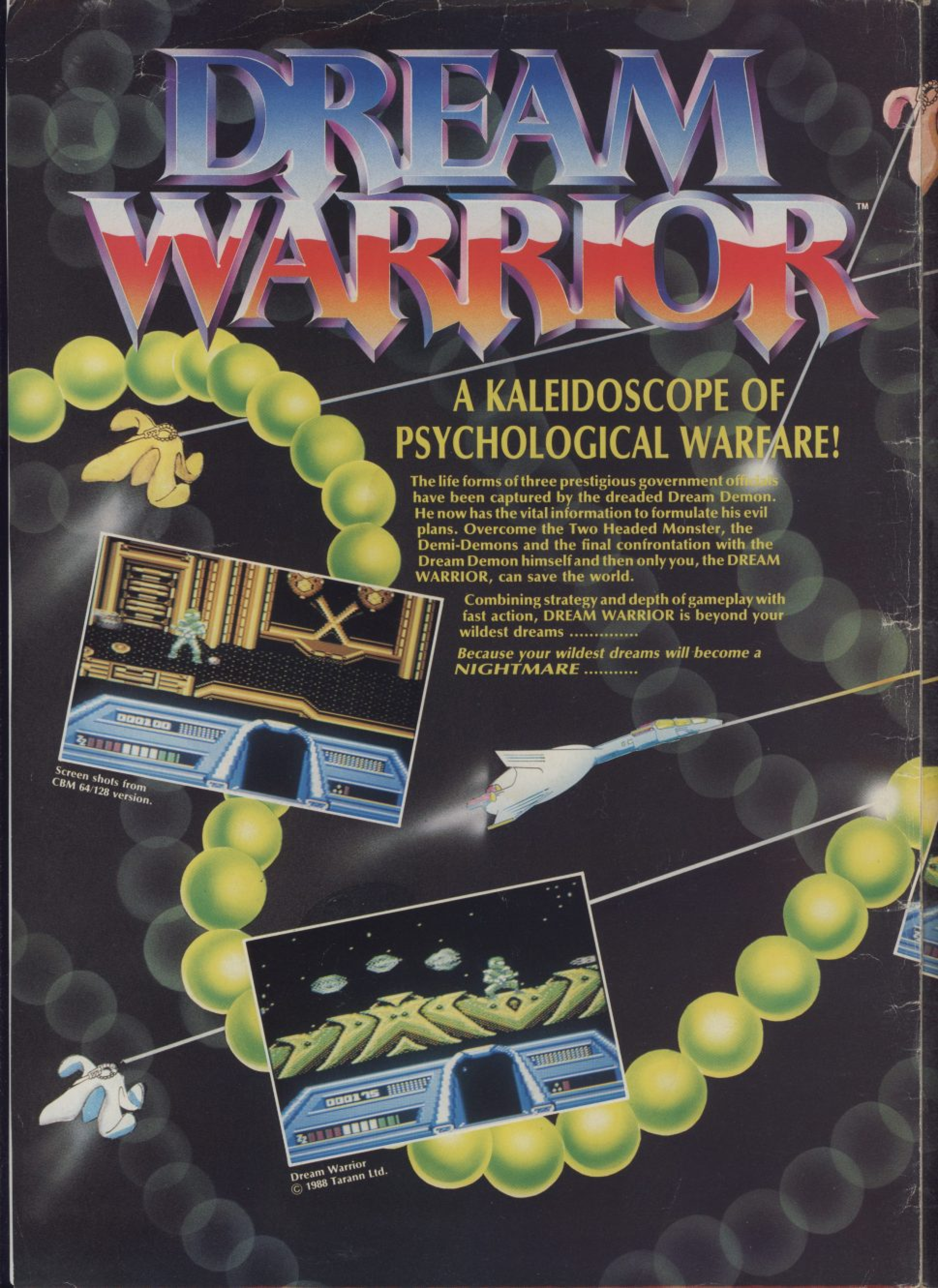
IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II

ARCADES: NEMESIS III

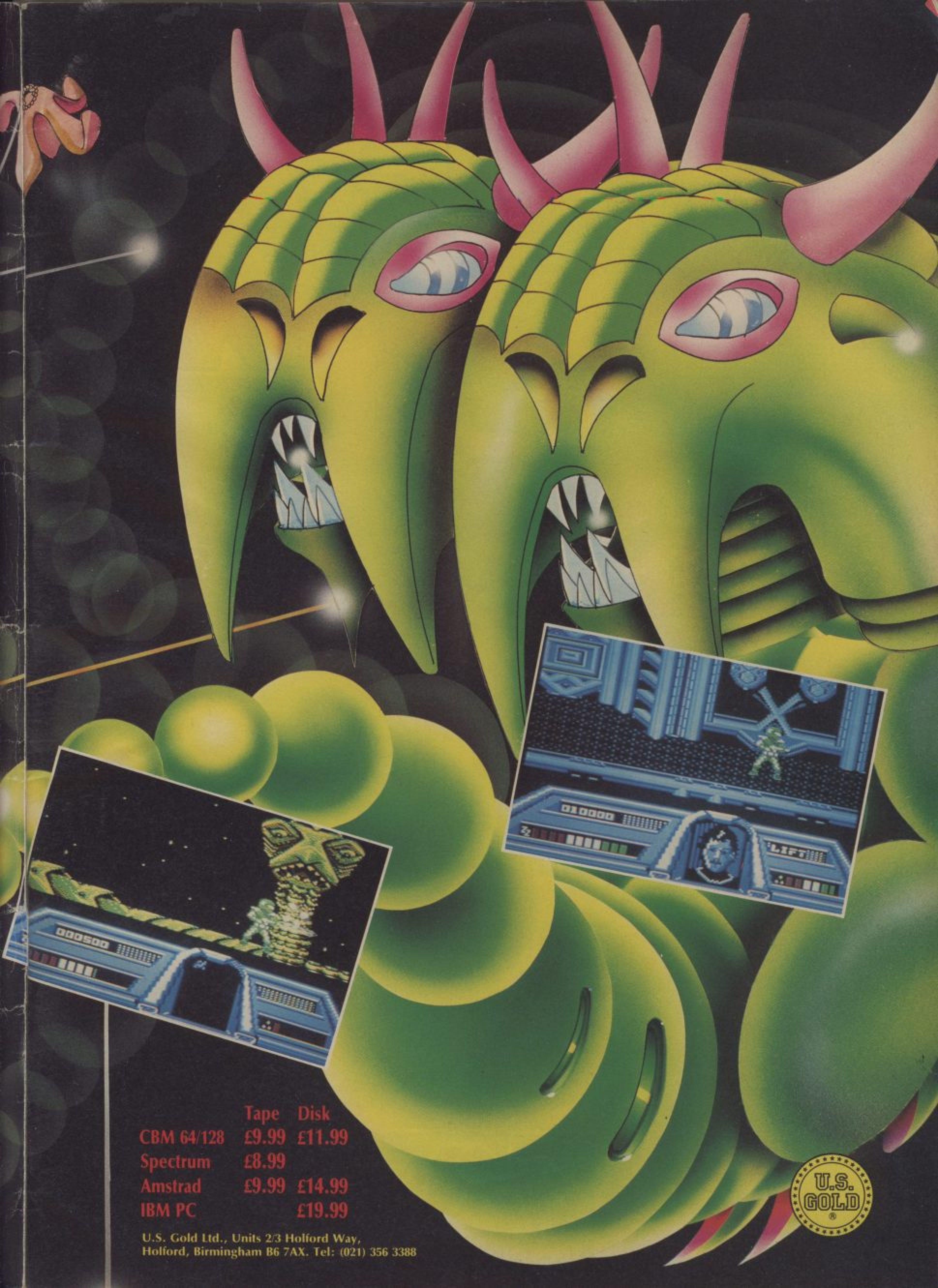
VULCAN VENTURE

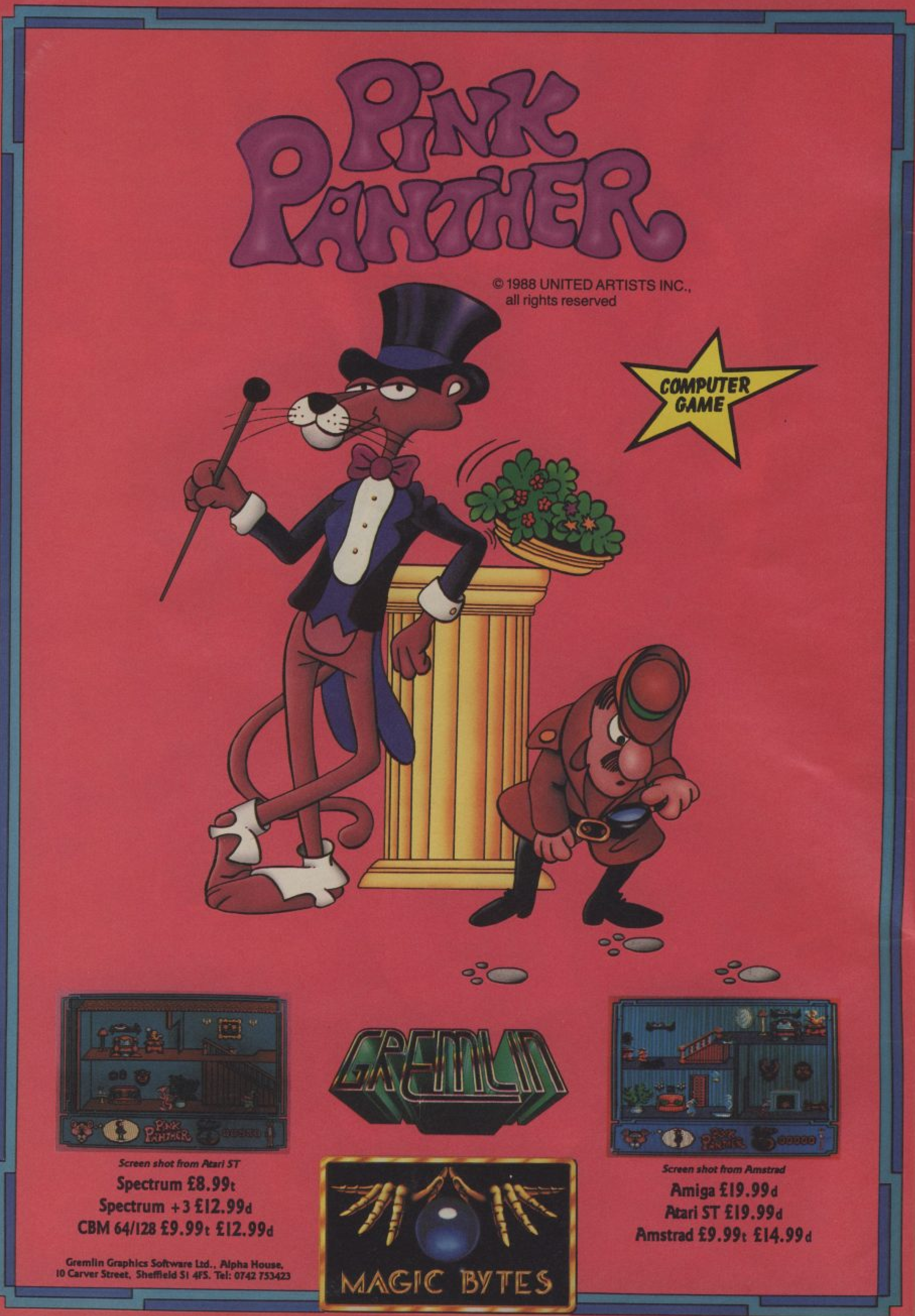
PLAY TO WIN: MAGNETRON, SAMURAI WARRIOR, INCREDIBLE iO MAP

ANOTHER AMAZING AMIGA PULL-OUT



DREAM WARRIOR™
A KALEIDOSCOPE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE!
The life forms of three prestigious government officials have been captured by the dreaded Dream Demon. He now has the vital information to formulate his evil plans. Overcome the Two Headed Monster, the Demi-Demons and the final confrontation with the Dream Demon himself and then only you, the DREAM WARRIOR, can save the world.
Combining strategy and depth of gameplay with fast action, DREAM WARRIOR is beyond your wildest dreams ....
Because your wildest dreams will become a NIGHTMARE ....
Screen shots from CBM 64/128 version.
Dream Warrior © 1988 Tarann Ltd.


U.S. GOLD


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GREMLIN
Screen shot from Atari ST
Spectrum £8.99t
Spectrum +3 £12.99d
CBM 64/128 £9.99t £12.99d
Screen shot from Amstrad
Amiga £19.99d
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Amstrad £9.99t £14.99d
MAGIC BYTES
Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha House,
10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423

CU Contents

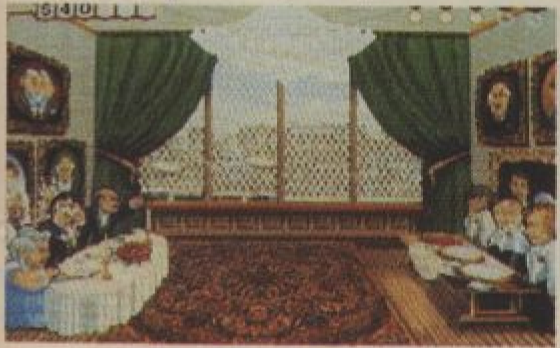
Specials





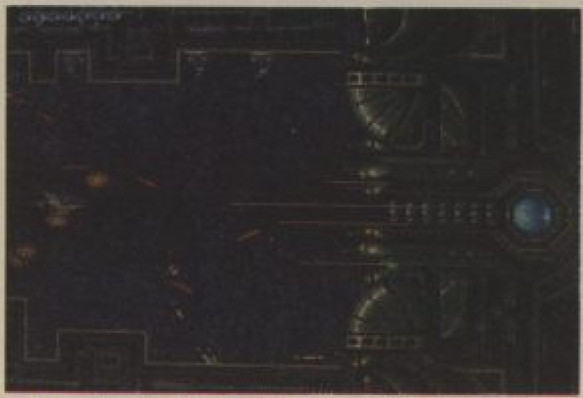
Bionic Commandos: hot arcade conversion.

Mucky stuff: The Three Stooges *romps in.*

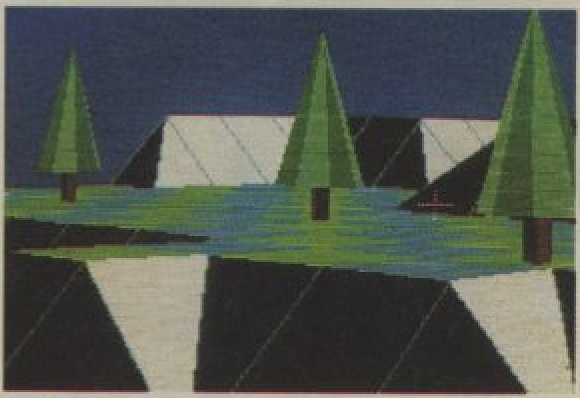


ABC
MEMBER OF THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS

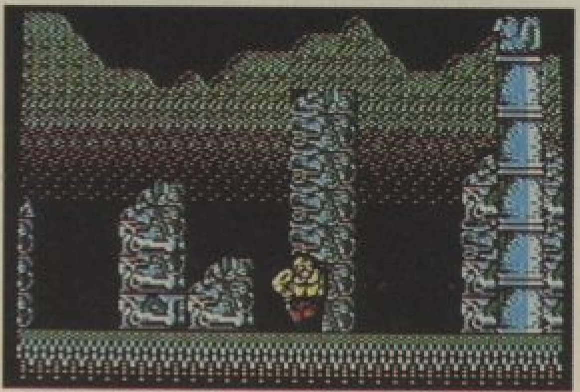
68,368
Jul-Dec 1987



Loadsablasting in Nemesis III: Vulcan Venture.



The Sentinel: *Geoff Crammond's bizarre concept hits the Amiga.*

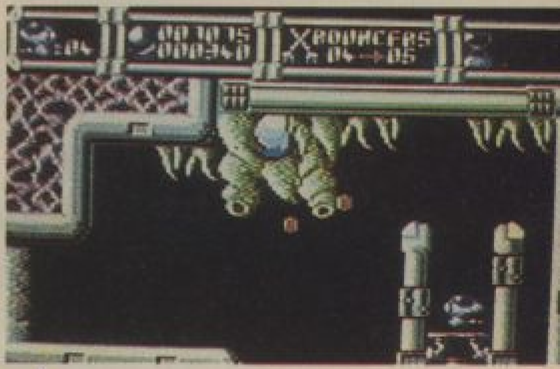


Yes, this really is the 64 conversion of Data East's Karnov.

Editor — Mike Pattenden; Deputy Editor — Gary Penn; Staff Writer — Nick Kelly; Art Editor — Elaine Bishop; Advertising Manager — Mark Scriven; Classified/Copy Control — Angela Smart; Publisher — Terry Pratt; Editorial/Advertising — 01-251 6222; Back Issues/Distribution — EMAP Frontline Limited, 1 Lincoln Court, Lincoln Road, Peterborough PE1 2RP Tel: 0733 555161; Subscriptions — PO Box 500, Leicester LE99 0AA Tel: 0858 34567; Annual Subs. (UK) £15; Europe — £24; World — £38. Registered Offices: Priory Court 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. ISS 0265-721X.
Cover Illustration: Simon Bisley

Regulars

Screen Scene



Super shoot 'em action in Cybernoid.

Gross out! Ace's ace Alien Syndrome conversion.



BUZZ



CYBERTANK ROLLS HOMEWARD

Those Activision bods sure like a challenge. Not only have they paid out for conversion rights to the most impossibly fast arcade game of all time, *Afterburner*, they've also just secured the licence for Corland Technology's *Cybertank*.

Don't worry if the name isn't familiar — this particular coin-op hasn't yet made it into the arcades over here yet. But those who read through Mike Pattenden's exclusive report from the Japanese JAMMA show which appeared in our December issue will recall his preview piece. Housed in a "cabinet of enormous proportions" is a two-player game, in which one of you sits driving your ironclad through hostile countryside while the other perches on top in the "gun turret", blasting all in sight. Now, while we're loath to suggest that anything is beyond the capabilities of Activision's programmers, for some reason we can't imagine that your floppy, when it eventually arrives, will come complete with a Centurion tank. And, somehow, we think that without its mega console, *Cybertank*'s appeal may be, erm, slightly diminished. Still, don't pay any attention to us, we're just hardened, cynical old hacks . . .

SENSIBLE SOCCER SELL-OUT

Sensible Software, the programming duo who brought you *Wizball* (released by Ocean) and the *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit* (Outlaw) are just putting the finishing touches to what is reputed to be one humdinger of a soccer game, based on the European Championships. And they've asked us to help sell it to a software house.

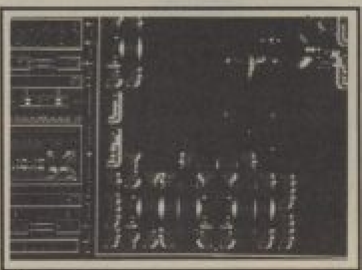
Featuring the likes of overhead kicks, banana shots and sliding tackles, and being an incredibly playable arcade game, it may come as a bit of a shock to hear that no label has yet been given the rights to release it. Why?

"Well," according to Sensible's Chris Yates, "we wanted to do a football game because there's no good football games about. And we decided, instead of going to a publisher first and then producing the game, that we'd produce it first and then invite software companies to make us an offer. In the past we haven't done that well financially, so we decided to do it this way instead, and be able to dictate terms a bit more than be dictated to."

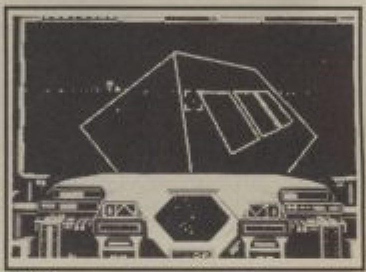
So first softco to approach Chris 'n' Jon with a cheque for £¾m and an E-type Jag (each) will get the eagerly awaited kickabout. Better hurry up if you're interested, fellas — Sensible are hoping to have it on the streets in time for the Championships this June.



MASTERTRONIC GET MUCKY



IN



OUT

Mastertronic have managed to score a major coup at the expense of Rainbird. The current series of ITV's popular Saturday morning TV show *Get Fresh* is using a specially adapted version of *Xenon* for their famous *Get Mucky* slot, in place of the former choice, *Starglider*.

As most of you will know, the idea of the *Get Mucky* slot is for two representatives of rival teams to blast away on a game for two-and-a-half minutes — whoever gets the least number of points gets a team member soaked in a disgusting snot-like substance.

Among the adaptations made to enable the Amiga shoot 'em up to be used for *Get Fresh* was getting rid of the 'ground attack' option — *Get Mucky Xenon* is purely aerial.

"We were approached by one of the researchers for the show," says a Mastertronic spokesperson. "Basically they wanted a new game for their new series, and also, I think, they felt that *Xenon* was more colourful, and worked better on TV."

LAST EMPEROR TO BE LICENSED?

Having picked up a record nine Oscars, Bertolucci's magnificent oriental epic "The Last Emperor" must surely be a strong candidate for a home computer conversion. At least that's what *Buzz* thought. But according to Ocean's Gary Bracey, the foremost film conversion software house won't be bidding for it.

"It's not the Oscars that make a good games licence, really, it's the box office. Besides I'm not sure how well it could be converted unless it was as an adventure. It's too serious. There's got to be a game visible within the film, sequences which would lend themselves to a game, for it to be worth converting."

So, if *The Last Emperor* is going to end up on your 64, it won't be through Ocean. But Bracey did reveal that Ocean do have plans for a new film licence — oh, what is it, Gaz, tell us please, oh doooo . . .?

"No, I can't tell you, I'm afraid — the ink isn't dry yet."





SOFT AID '88

As part of the Sport Aid '88 campaign, budget house Code Masters are releasing *The Race Against Time*, an arcade adventure which will be marketed worldwide, with all the proceeds going to help underprivileged children around the globe.

You'll play Sudanese athlete Omar Khalifa, and your task is to run from continent to continent around the world, taking part in various sporting events as you go. Marathons in Africa, karate in Japan, and a whole host of other events await you, and at just £1.99 on the 64, and £9.99 on the Amiga, you should all be able to dig deep and help people who really need your support.

The *Race Against Time* should be in your local dealers any day now. So what are you waiting for?

GHOSTS IN THE PALACE

Elite have just announced the impending release of *Beyond The Ice Palace*, described by themselves as "a magical game of fantasy". Your quest is to rid a forest of ghosts and evil spirits, and return the land to peace and tranquility. There are extra weapons to pick up, goblins, ghosts and assorted other beasties to destroy, and a good spirit to help you out if things get a bit too tough.

In fact, all in all, it looks not three trillion miles away from being an update of Elite's own conversion of the Capcom coin-op, *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* which proved so popular on its release back in '86. Why, those with long memories will recall that *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* even featured an ice palace. A coincidence? You'll be able to decide for yourselves towards the end of the month, when *Beyond The Ice Palace* is released.

BUZZ

Programmers Advice: If you're a programmer who's suffered at the hands of unscrupulous softsharks, or one who's just starting out and wants some advice on avoiding the pitfalls and rip-offs, you might consider dropping a line to the Programmers Marketing and Advisory Service, at Newcastle House, High Spen, Rowlands Gill, Tyne & Wear, NE39 2BL. Recently set up, this service has been established to help people trying to break into the software industry, and will help and advise on software's marketability, fair royalty rates and generally act as a go-between between programmers and software houses.

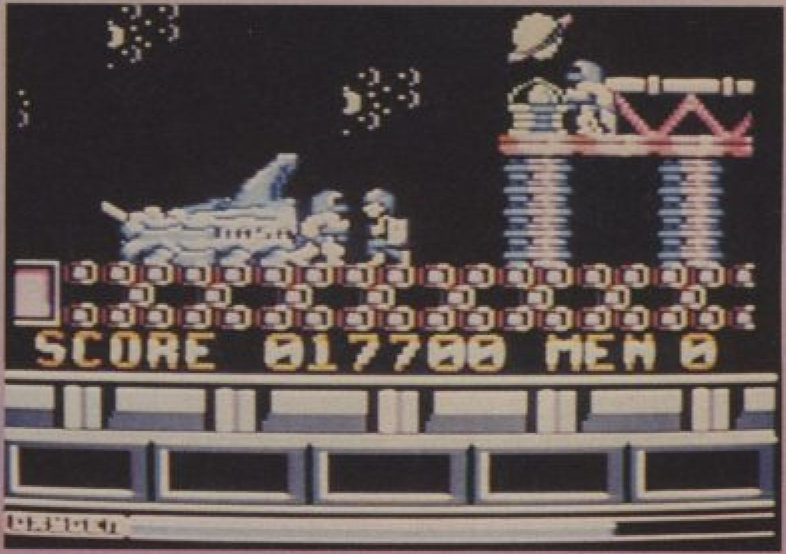
16-bit SEUCK: Soon Amiga owners will be able to experience the thrills of DIY blasting. Outlaw have just let us know that there's an Amiga version of their enormously popular *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit.* It's being programmed by Amiga *Barbarian* programmer Richard Leinfellner and should be out early next month.

Hewson's Amiga Moves: Autumn will see the release by Hewson of three of their most popular products on Amiga. The products involved are *Zynaps, Exolon* and *Nebulus.*

FIL in: French software publishing and distribution house FIL (France Image Logiciel) are planning to launch themselves in this country at this Autumn's PCW show, where they hope to be able to give details of five coin-op conversions which they've signed up.

Skate Craze Continues: Gremlin hop onto the pavement roller bandwagon with the impending release of their *Skate Crazy.* However, Freddy, the hero, zooms about throwing stunts and falling over on *roller* skates rather than on a skateboard. Side A puts him in a multi-storey car park and Side B contains a completely separate game which allows him to zoom through underground subways and city streets. With plenty of obstacles to be negotiated and credibility marks to be scored, *Skate Crazy* is due out this month.

BUZZ





NORTHSTAR

In space no-one can hear you scream, they say, and it's also quite difficult to breathe, so all-in all it's probably just as well that the hero of Gremlin's *Northstar* is a robot — so much less hysterical and destructible than those inferior fleshy human thingies. Still, even for a robot, clearing an entire space station which has been overrun by marauding aliens is no joke. You're single-handed, natch, but what a hand it is: along *Rygar*-style extendo-limb, vital both for disembowlling space-scum and for opening trickily-placed supply pods to gain extra weaponry and points. Pretty good fun it sounds to us, considering you're made of tin.

NETHERWORLD

Strange folk, these Finns. Must be all those ghostly northern lights of something. Take Charlie Tee, for instance: it seems he just couldn't be satifisfied with, say, a cutesy platform game, or a spaceage shoot 'em up. No, he had to throw in acid-spitting lizards, clusters of alien eggs and eyeball-dispensing skulls. Obviously a devotee of the Iron Maiden school of graphic horror, Charlie's *Netherworld* is due for release from Hewson in the near future. We hope you all enjoy it. We're not coming out from under the covers until it goes away.





SCORPIUS

With four levels, two players and about twenty squillion sprites, Silverbird's *Scorpious* looks like a superfabrill combination of all of the hottest horizontally-scrolling progressive shoot 'em ups ever made — and it's a budget game! Yup, you'll soon be able to climb aboard your trusty sub-aqua combat scooter, streak through backgrounds varying from the seaweedy to the intestinal, pick up literally zillions of weapons and add-ons, and blow hell out of any number of strange and macabre enemies (skulls, sea-snakes and spinning thingies among the most impressive), all for a piffling £1.99. Less than the price of a Capitalcard, and far more fun, *Scorpius* is due for an early Summer release.

HERCULES

The Gods who featured in ancient Greek mythology were, it must be said, a fairly mischievous bunch. Take the cautionary tale of Hercules. Now, this fine specimen of Hellenic manhood's only sin was that he was the product of a union between his mum, Ackmene, who was yer average mortal, and Zeus, the boss of all the gods. The gods set him twelve dreadfully tough tasks to do in order the expiate his "wrongdoing". The rest is history, or was until those canny Gremlin folk decided to bring out *Hercules — Slayer Of The Damned*, allowing thereby giving Twentieth century 64 buffs a chance to wander around in sword, shield and shiny helmet, hacking skeletons, slashing minotaurs, and generally being brave and heroic. Complete the tasks to clear your conscience — or, if you don't happen to feel guilty, do 'em for fun. Hercules is due out this month.



DREAM WARRIOR

Well, we suppose stranger things have happened . . . In US Gold's slightly offbeat *Dream Warrior*, three top government officials have been taken over by the dastardly Dream Demon and his minions who've infiltrated the [illegible] VIPs' [illegible]nesses, (*eses — Ed*) and your job is to beam into the victims' dreams, taking on and vanquishing the various minor demons you encounter, putting together the pieces of the officials' heads until their lifeforces have been successfully recaptured. There's a showdown with the DD himself, of course, and, whatever you do, keep the life force asleep until it's completely freed . . . (*don't blame us, we just type up what they tell us — Buzz drone*).

ECHELON

Is it a flight sim? Is it an arcade game? Is it an adventure? All three, actually, according to the v. excited US Gold bods, and quite a bit more besides. In *Echelon* you're the pilot of a C104 Tomahawk and you've been ordered to fly about the place, blasting pirates, protecting peaceable space traders and miners, and generally keeping the planet Isis a pleasant and happy place to carry out your day-to-day business. PLUS!!! We understand that this fab new product — release date sometime towards the start of the summer — will also allow you check out a brilliant new sprocket, codename "The LipStik", which give you voice-activated command possibilities! Nope, we don't know how this wonder gismo, which plugs into the spare joystick port, will work in practice, nor how much one will cost you.



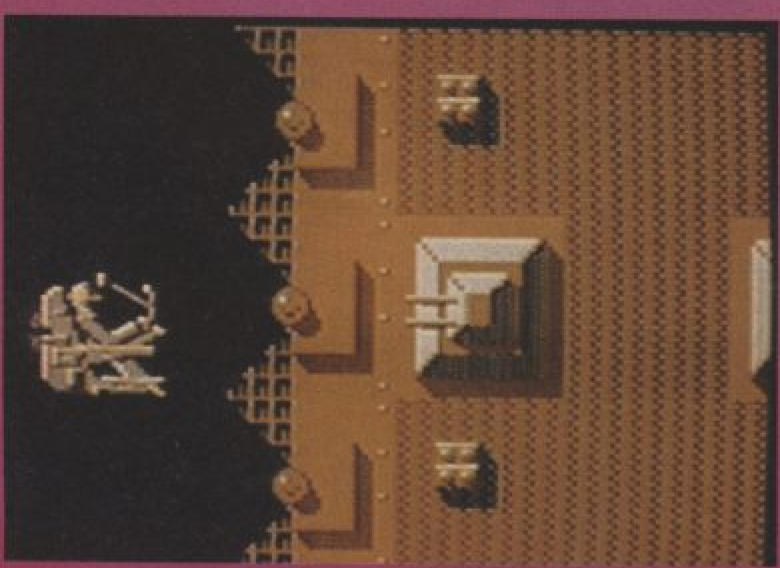


TRIGGER HAPPY

A complex fantasy role-playing game, in which you must try to deduce the theory of relativity from first principles by picking up segments of mathematical equations from mystic amphoras? No, silly, *Trigger Happy*, from CRL, is in fact a shoot 'em up, in which you you have to guide your largish ship (with you pictured seated inside) through an armada of enemy cruisers over a landscape of camouflaged gun emplacements, mazes and traps. Yes, most of the standard things are in there, including the regulation naff storyline on the back of the packaging. Still, with the self-repairing rapid-fire cannon, there's *loadsablasting* involved, which, when all is said done, is what it's all about, isn't it, Brian?

DARK SIDE

So you thought that after all those months of programming and hyping those industrious Incentive folk put into their last Meisterwerk, *Driller*, they'd been mowing the lawn, worming the dog and generally catching up on those long-neglected chores. Wrong — they've been planning an even more mega follow-up. *Dark Side*, it seems, refers to the dark side of the moon, where some incredibly evil force has caused a gathering of Energy Collecting Devices to occur in that desolate region. When this deadly matrix collects sufficient energy, a laser beam will be created which will neatly split the earth in two. That is, unless you, and your trusty jet pack can stop 'em. Featuring, like its predecessor, loads of solid 3D graphics and all that tosh, *Dark Side* is released next month.



CHAR

Only six games out of our top twenty are full-price this month which must send a shiver of fear down the backs of the major software houses. The number one slot is taken over as we predicted by *Ghostbusters*, a title that's already sold over a quarter of a million across all formats.

Re-releases are coining it in with *Popeye, Dan Dare* and *Exploding Fist* all in the top twenty. Over on full price *Stealth Fighter* is still cruising up the top of the chart whilst *Predator* has taken out *Platoon* in the jungle warfare battle. *Ikari Warriors* makes a strong showing as a new entry at number 14, but oh, it looks like there's going to be some trilby chomping after last month's rash predictions about *IO* and *Arkanoid — Revenge Of Doh* (not *Arkanoid 2* as some less well-informed magazines call it).

Star Wars claims top spot over on the Amiga chart, but what a shame to see *Strip Poker 2* doing so well. Now we know what you 16 bitters get up to in *your* bedrooms!

Predictions? Well, no rash claims about eating our hats or swearing by our wage packets, but *Impossible Mission II* has to be in with a shout for number one, whilst *Cybernoid* should do well too. That's if you're listening to us.

ADVENTURE CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
2	NE	BARD'S TALE 2	ELECTRONIC ARTS
3	NE	LORDS OF CONQUEST	ELECTRONIC ARTS
4	4	GUILD OF THIEVES	RAINBIRD
5	2	BARD'S TALE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
6	6	GNOME RANGER	LEVEL 9
7	3	JINXTER	RAINBIRD
8	7	KNIGHT ORC	RAINBIRD
9	8	PAWN	RAINBIRD
10	5	LORD OF THE RINGS	MELBOURNE HOUSE

READERS COIN-OP CHART

TM	LM	
1	2	OUT RUN
2	1	AFTERBURNER
3	3	DOUBLE DRAGON
4	4	WEC LE MANS
5	RE	R-TYPE

My, but last month's chart certainly brought the *Out Run* fanatics out — after their fave game dropped to second place behind *Afterburner*, 'undreds of you sent in loadsavotes for this epic car game, sending it right back to poll position. Keep 'em coming, top fives that is, to Readers Coin-op Chart, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

TOP TEN RIP-OFFS

1) BRINKSMATT ROBBERY
Who says crime doesn't pay?

2) MARADONNA'S HANDBALL
Against England, Mexico '86

3) THE DHSS REFORM BILL
Robbing the poor

4) THE PILTDOWN MAN
The great anthropoligical con

5) THE HITLER DIARIES
"A classic existentialist autobiography."
A. Hitler, Scunthorpe, 1984

6) THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE
Malcolm McLaren's musical masterplan

7) AMERICAN EVANGELISM
Born again hypocrisy

8) BUGNER VS BRUNO
Which just goes to show every loser wins

9) LESTER PIGGOT
Spent his racing career on the inside and is still there

10) TOM KEATING
Faked Impressionist paintings and fooled the artworld

C64 CHART

TM	LM		
1	2	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC
2	8	PREDATOR	ACTIVISION
3	1	PLATOON	OCEAN
4	3	WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST	MASTERTRONIC
5	NE	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON
6	6	PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER	MICROPROSE
7	NE	BATTLE VALLEY	RACK-IT
8	7	FRUIT MACHINE SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
9	5	OUT RUN	SEGA-US GOLD
10	11	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
11	10	SOCCER BOSS	ALTERNATIVE
12	9	TRAP DOOR	ALTERNATIVE
13	12	BMX KIDS	FIREBIRD
14	NE	IKARI WARRIORS	ELITE
15	4	I BALL 2	FIREBIRD
16	17	POPEYE	ALTERNATIVE
17	18	GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR	CODE MASTERS
18	NE	DAN DARE	MASTERTRONIC
19	14	TEST DRIVE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
20	19	ZYBEX	ZEPPELIN



RTS

AMIGA CHART

TM	LM		
1	3	STAR WARS	DOMARK
2	NE	FERRARI FORMULA 1	ELECTRONIC ARTS
3	2	XENON	MELBOURNE HOUSE
4	4	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
5	NE	SIDEWINDER	MASTERTRONIC
6	NE	JOE BLADE	PLAYERS
7	NE	STRIP POKER 2	ANCO
8	1	ROAD WARS	MELBOURNE HOUSE
9	5	GARRISON	RAINBOW ARTS
10	NE	BATTLESHIPS	ELITE



REVIEWERS CHOICE

What are the CU Crew playing with at the moment?

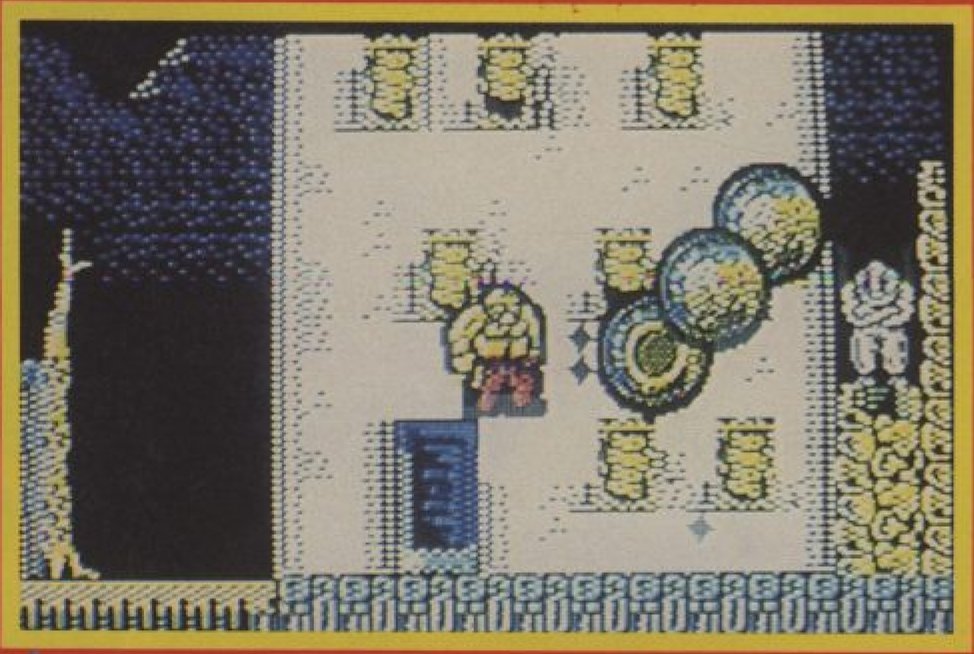
THE ED: Cybernoid (64), International Soccer (64) and skiing.

GAZZA: Bionic Commandos (64), Sentinel (Amiga).

NICK KELLY: Vulcan Venture (coin-op), Super Giana Sisters (to be reviewed), Arkanoid (Amiga) but Mike's confiscated it.

MARK PATTERSON: Cybernoid (64), Gutz (64).





Bash the boulders . . .

KAŘNOV

64/128
Activision
Price:
£9.99/cass
£14.99/disk

KARNOV — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- VIDEO
- AUDIO
- TOUGHNESS
- ENDURANCE
- VFM

CU RATING: 4

Like our cover story, *Bionic Commandos,* Data East's *Karnov,* the story of a Russian firebreather, didn't fare too well. In fact you'd be hard put to find one in many top arcades less than a year after it was launched.

For all that it would have made a nice 64 conversion, so what a pity nobody could be bothered to do the job properly. Instead Activision have simply ported over the Spectrum version without any regard for the difference in capabilities of the two machines.

What you have with *Karnov* is the fairly standard gameplay — a left to right scrolling shoot 'em up with platforms. It's a simple revamp of the *Ghosts'n'Goblins* idea, but despite that had it been quick, testing and colourful it would have been enough to please most arcade players. There's nine levels of play, with a possible 11 extra items worth collecting like wings, boats and apples.

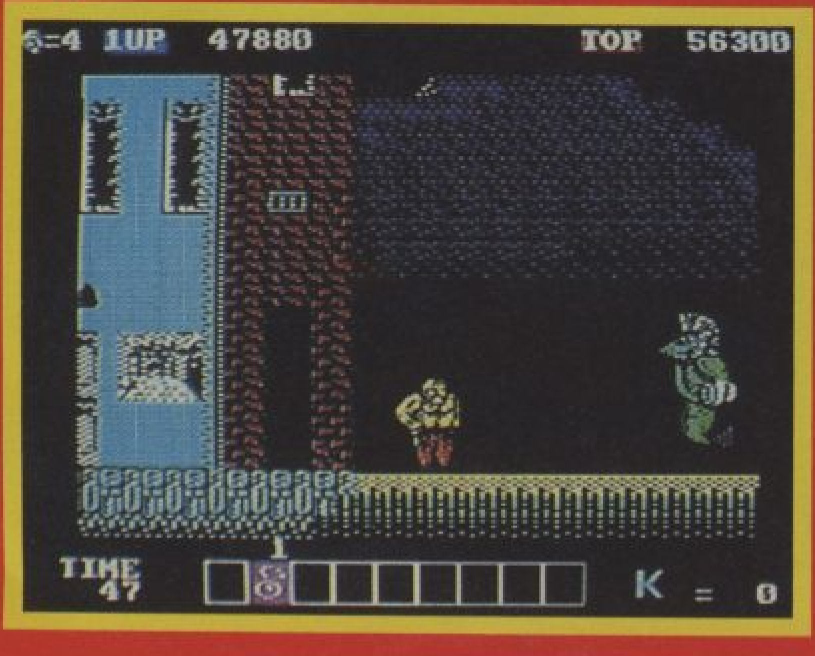
So what's missing? Everything. The backdrops are limited to four colour jobs and consequently look like a blocky unfinished demo in places. Worse still, although ol' bunsen breath is well defined, he has a sort of black aura round him caused by attribute clash round the character boundaries. The last time I saw anything like that it was on a C16 game.

I could put up with much of it this if the gameplay was in there, but someone mislaid that as well. This type of stuff relies on plenty of dodging and diving around, but *Karnov* is about as manoeuvreable as a JCV in quicksand. The reason being, that the game is so agonisingly slow, that's s-l-o-w, slow. The game's 'nine levels of absorbing gameplay' promised in the booklet turn into hours of turgid ploughing against the odds taking ages to jump and turn. That's if you want to perserve that long.

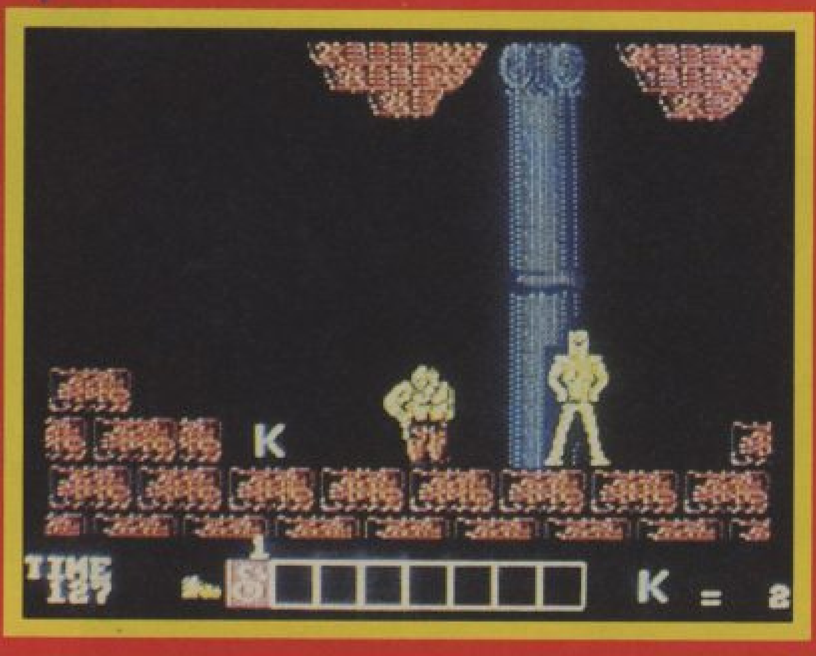
After all this the sound is pretty peripheral but I may as well whinge about the Spectrumesque burps and bleeps. All of which means that this conversion doesn't have anything to recommend it at all, which for a game based on a circus is pretty ironic. Send in the clowns.

Mike Pattenden

. . . Fry the fish . . .

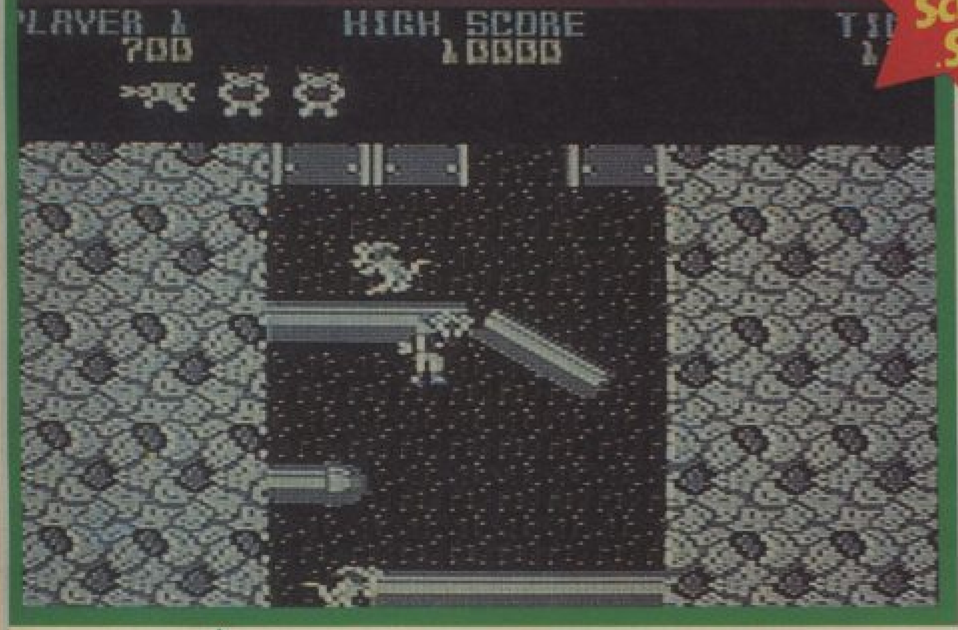


. . . but don't bust a gut.



C.U. Screen Star

BIONIC COMMANDO



The Bionic Commando swings into action on Stage Four.

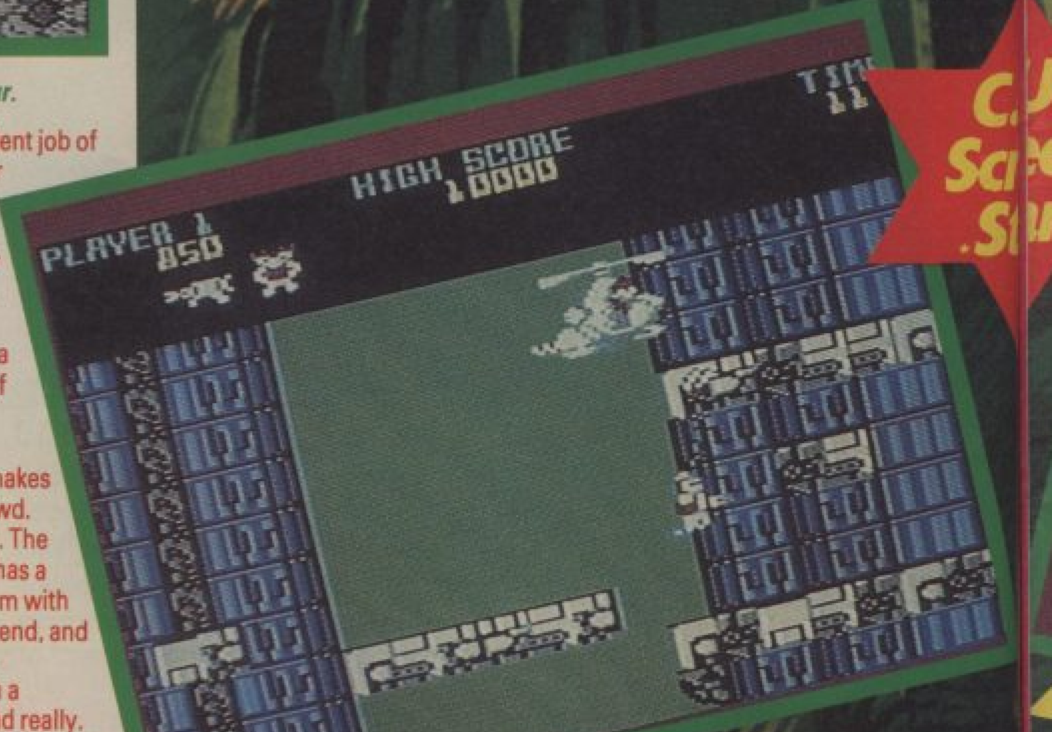
64/128
GO!
Price:
£9.99/cass
£11.99/disk

Isn't it funny how the best coin-up conversions aren't necessarily the ones converted from block-busting arcade games. Take Konami's *Combat School*, a rather neat variation on the *Hyper Sports* theme which surprisingly bombed in the arcades, but made a very good 64 game when converted by Imagine last year. Not so mega arcade licences like Sega's *Out Run* or even *Space Harrier*, which didn't come across too well, though the less said about these the better.

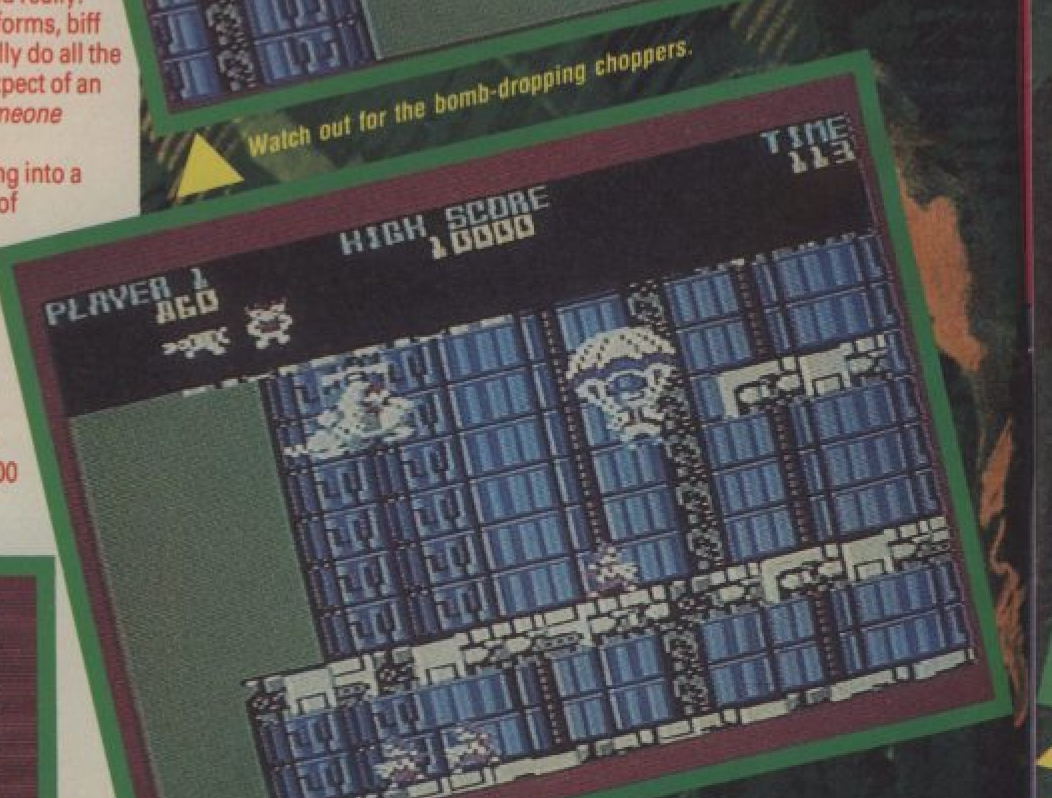
Capcom's *Bionic Commandos* is the latest example that even the most mediocre coin-op can make a decent home computer game. It barely made a ripple in the ocean of new arcade machines when released earlier this year, although it did attract a cult following. This ace conversion contains all the playability of the original, thanks to the talents of Steven Ruddy, the Software Creations programmer who made such an excellent job of Taito's *Bubble Bobble* for Firebird. It also marks the long overdue arrival of GO!, and makes up for their previous disasters, *Side Arms* in particular.

Bionic Commandos is a fairly hackneyed blend of platform and shooting action, with one big innovative feature that makes it stand out from the crowd. And that's the Bionic bit. The commando in question has a rather nifty telescopic arm with a grappling hook on the end, and this can be used — well, like a telescopic arm with a grappling hook on the end really. You can swing from platforms, biff the bad guys and generally do all the cool things one would expect of an extendable arm (*pick someone else's nose? Ed*).

You start by parachuting into a forest with the objective of infiltrating the enemy base to deactivate their missiles. This involves negotiating five multi-directional scrolling levels jam-packed with armed soldiers and an assortment of other odd adversaries. You have 200



Watch out for the bomb-dropping choppers.



Drop in for T- for Trouble . .

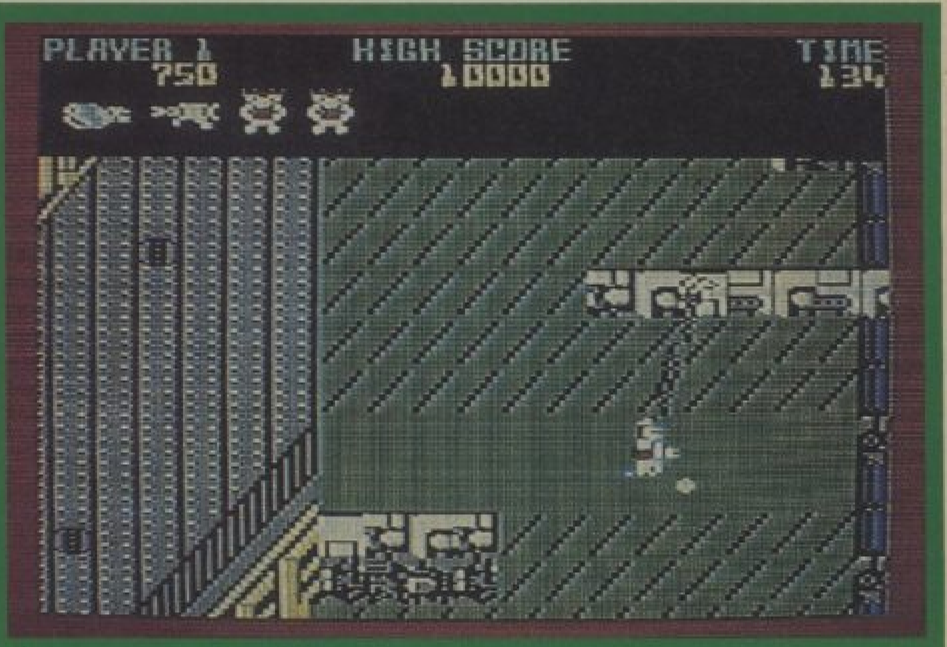
Timmmmber! Beware falling branches.



C.U. Screen Star

NIC
ANDOS

C.U. Screen Star



Pipes and gremlins abound . . .

seconds to reach the exit on each level — failure to do so results in the loss of a life, and you have to start the level from scratch.

The first stage, entitled Danger! Keep Out! sees you swinging from tree to tree, shooting enemy soldiers and avoiding killer bees, birds and spiky plants. Stage Two is the Forefront, a large fort occupied by more nasty soldiers, along with cannons and fat crate-throwing geezers.

Infiltration is the name of the third stage, in which you meet little green gremlins which nibble away at the pipework, causing chunks to fall and endangering your life.

The fourth stage is the Control Tower, with large barriers to pass, a lift to ride, and bomb-dropping choppers and robotic hoppers to shoot or avoid. Further into the level there are huge robots to pass, which is made difficult by their stomping feet. The fifth and final section features even more soldiers to do battle with, as you attempt to Stop The Missile.

Useful equipment is dropped by parachute at certain points along the way, and is collected by shooting or knocking off the parachute and then picking it up — either by running over it or using your arm (much posier). Extra firepower is usually conveyed, although you can pick up a device which speeds up your arm movement.

The worst thing about this conversion is the graphics. As you can see, they're not too clear, and at times they're a bit of a mess. It's a shame they aren't up to the same standard as the rest of the package, as their crudeness could put you off what is basically one of the most playable games I've seen in a long while. There's a different soundtrack on each level to enhance the atmosphere and invigorate the soul, although some are very odd in places. The title music is also first class.

Whether you're a fan of the coin-op or not, this super conversion of *Bionic Commandos* should keep you entertained for the money. I'm not too sure about its lasting interest as there are only five sections and it may not take too long to crack, but even so it's great fun and a damn sight better than previous GO! releases. Thank heavens they've started to produce some decent software. Hopefully *Black Tiger* will be of a similar high quality.

Gary Penn



Extra firepower lies just out of reach.



Ug-lee! messy graphics on Level Two.

BIONIC COMMANDOS — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

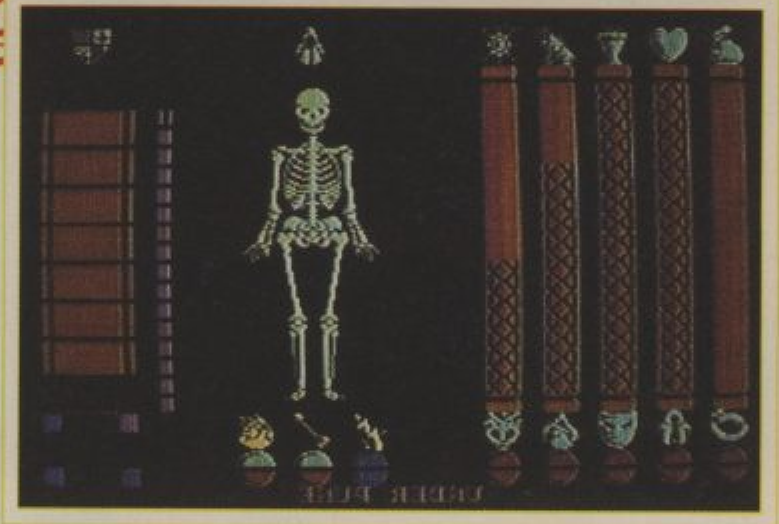
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

8





A druid in pieces is no use to anyone.

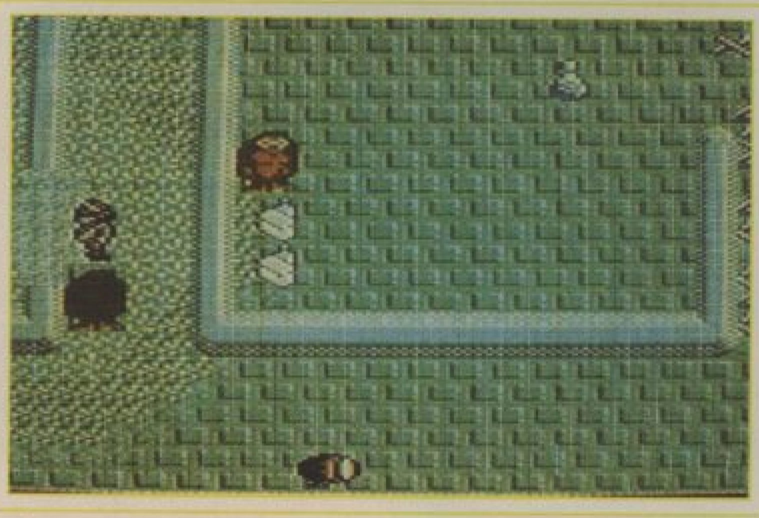
GOTHIK

64/128 Firebird Price: £9.95/cass £14.95/disk

Take one good druid, a village, two vikings and an evil overlord. Put them together, whisk vigorously and cook on a low heat for twenty minutes and you get the plot to *Gothik*.

Meander through the boring stuff (long ago, peaceful land, blah blah blah), and it turns out that a powerful and incredibly evil overlord has enslaved the village of Belron. The only defence for the villagers was in the form of the minor league druid Hasrinaxx. But the wimpy natives, scared by the overlord, laid down their arms and surrendered. Poor old Hasrinaxx is stuffed and ends up having body trapped by a spell, divided into six parts and secreted in a large castle. That's where you come in.

You then enter the first level of the first tower. This looks like *Gauntlet* with flu — green and lifeless. Instead of doors you find huge 'wads' of braken blocking your path. If you get far enough you will come face to face with sixteen different types of monster. The monster types are grouped into two main categories, the ones with arms and the ones without. The ones with arms fire lightning bolts at you and tend to be rather violent. The other type fire homing bombs at you.



Gothik a Gauntlet *replika*.

To get past the braken you can use firestorms which burns all braken within a set range. Or you can use a fireball. Fireballs are the most powerful of your armoury. You can adjust their power, but when they are at maximum strength they cause an explosion which takes up nearly two thirds of the screen. At the epicentre the fireball can kill a monster or blow down a section of wall, further out it weakens the monsters and burns all the braken it touches.

As well as the fireballs you have lightning bolts. You can fire as many as fifteen of these in a salvo and they continue to ricochet around the maze for quite a while. Both these spells drain your magic power, but this can be topped up by collecting chalices. If you run out of magic power or just think economically, you can use the traditional bow and arrows.

You can collect magic charms which deplete your energy rapidly but are very useful. There's also a ring of invisibility, and a chameleon cloak which makes you look like an inanimate object to dumb creatures. Better still are Medusa's head, a Grim Reaper and a doppelganger mask.

What *Gothik* boasts most of all has to be the potions — 32 all told. Some of the potions are standard (heal, extra magic etc) while other potions destroy all the walls on the level, fill all vacant on-screen spaces with braken or create friendly clones of you every time a creature dies.

At the end of a castle tower there is the troll guardian. He is set at the end of a single screen mini-maze. As you start to move towards the troll he wakes up and starts chasing after you. When you reach the troll he combusts into thin air and you receive one of Hasrinaxx's bits.

Gothik has a lot more to offer than can be gleaned from a first impression. Well worth a look.

Mark Patterson





GOTHIK — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1–10
VIDEO	6
AUDIO	6
TOUGHNESS	8
ENDURANCE	7
VFM	7

CU RATING 7


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If you thought there was nothing harder than diamond then you were wrong. Meet the Bionic Commandos — two lean, mean fightin' machines, with nothing to lose and everything to gain. A bit like you, really *(this is even worse than last month — Ed)*. All you have to do is correctly answer the quesions below and provide a good enough tie-breaker and you've a won yourself a lean, mean Commodore machine — a brand spanking new Amiga. (Cue ooo! from the Price Is Right canned audience). The next 25 best tie-breakers will find a copy of GO!'s truly sonic conversion of CapCom's *Bionic Commandos* dropping through their letter box. But you better get your entry to us before 18th May 1988 . . . Send it to: BIONIC COMPO, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU.

1. Who played the part of Steve Austin, the bionic man?
2. What was the name of the bionic woman?
3. How many bionic bits did the bionic man have?
4. How much did they cost?

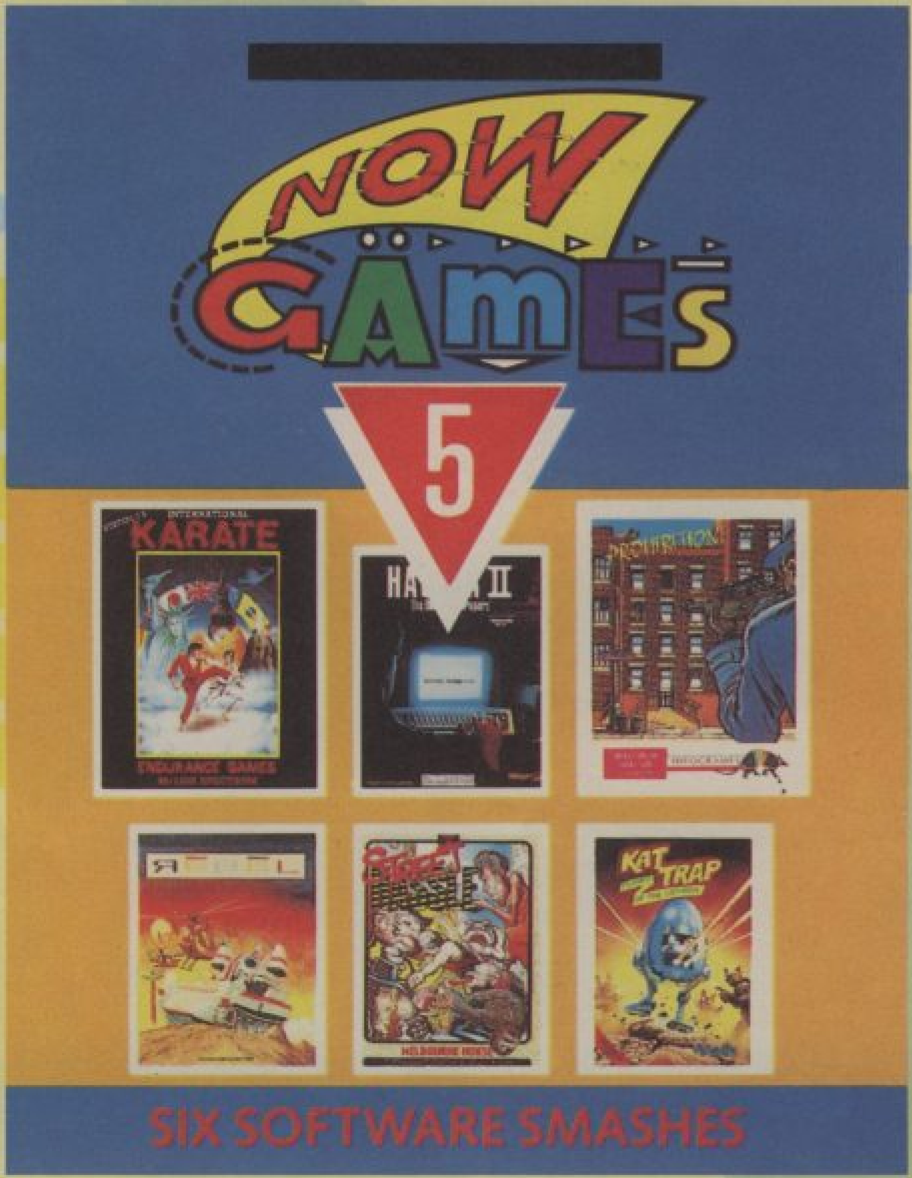
Tie-Breaker Question . . .
We've had Vince and Paul in SNK's *Ikari Warriors,* and Super Joe Crack in Capcom's *Commando.* But the bionic commandos don't seem to have names, let alone silly ones — so how about supplying us with some, eh? The names that make Mike chuckle (oh alright — manage to raise a smile) win the Amiga (provided he or she answered to the above questions correctly).


SAMURAI WARRIOR
THE BATTLE OF.... USAGI YOJIMBO
I AM USAGI YOJIMBO, RONIN SAMURAI AND BODYGUARD. GUIDE ME THROUGH THE DANGEROUS LANDS OF FEUDAL JAPAN AS I SEEK REVENGE ON THAT TREACHEROUS SCUM HIKIJI. AN EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME IN BATTLE, SO STAY ALERT HONOURABLE FRIEND, ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN NEXT THE ENEMY WILL STRIKE.
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Pandora

64/128 Firebird Price: £9.95/cass £14.95/disk

No, I refuse to keep on playing it. I don't want to be subjected to a game that kills you as soon as you move. It's not that the nasties come at you in great hordes, or that the laser fire is well nigh impossible to avoid. Oh no, I mean that you die as soon as you push the joystick.

Pandora is the thing responsible for killing you. It's a seventh generation computer which runs the generation ship, aptly named Pandora. After roaming in space for two centuries, Pandora is returning home. No one knows why she is returning, and no-one wants to find out. I can understand that. One look at the game, and I didn't want to.

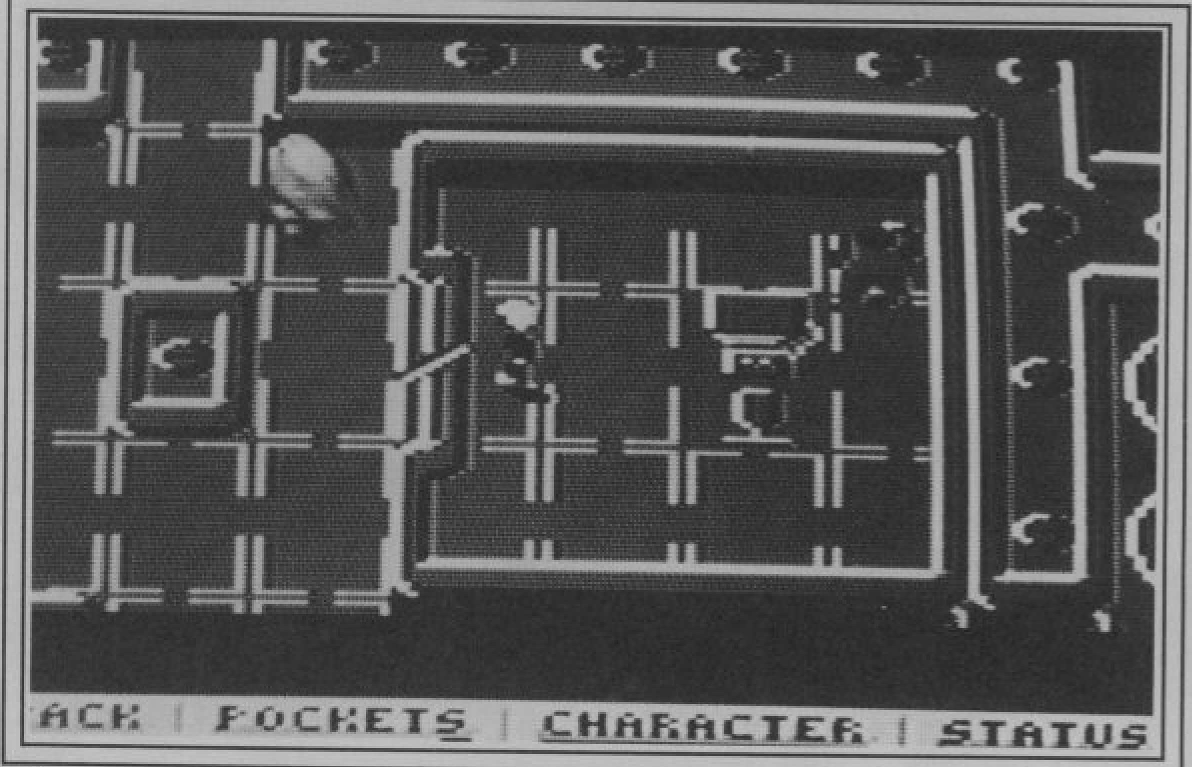
You have been sent up to the ship to investigate Pandora and report if anything 'odd' has happened. The first thing you find when you start the game is that if you try to move and you are not carrying an ID pass, a roof laser burns you to a crisp. A quick search of your pockets shows that you don't have an ID pass, so what are you supposed to do? Simple. Wait for a person to come up to you, say "Here's my pass, you are the only one who can defeat Pan . . ." and die before your very eyes. Check your pockets now, and you see that a very nice pass has appeared. You are now free to move — what a way to start a game.

The ship is set over a vast multi-scrolling area, in a similar vein to the much cloned *Gauntlet*. Your character moves in any of four directions, and speaking of your character, what a blocky little sprite it is. In fact, blockiness is the name of the game. There's not one sprite or chunk of graphic that isn't made up of large coloured blocks.

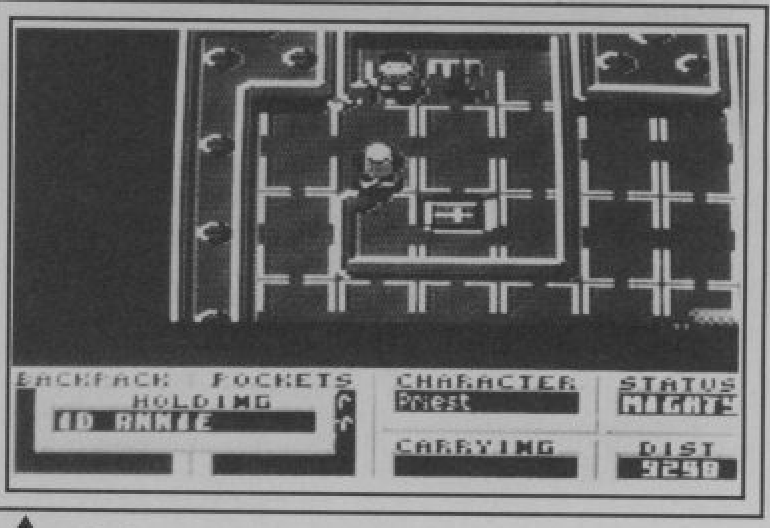
One thing this game has got going for it is a large amount of characters. In a small room just north from where you start, a priest blesses every-man and his mother. Lots of dead people line the floors, and they can be searched and things can be stolen. For example, higher rank ID passes, needed to access certain areas of the ship and/or disable forcefields. And then there is, dan dan dan daaa, boo, hiss, the THIEF. Who is tha man in black? (*GP? — Ed*) The thief is a very fast black mess who runs at you, recites a poem and steals your ID pass. What a blower. Once he gets near you, there's nothing you can do. You can't fight him, because as soon as he touches you, away goes your pass and puff go you.

As you've probably gathered, *Pandora* isn't the most user-friendly game ever seen. It's all very well having loads of problems to overcome, but not when they're of the unnecessarily frustrating variety. Who needs hassle like this when you're supposed to be enjoying the game? This more adventure-orientated style of *Gauntlet* game has enormous potential, but sadly the programmers of *Pandora* have totally miss the point.

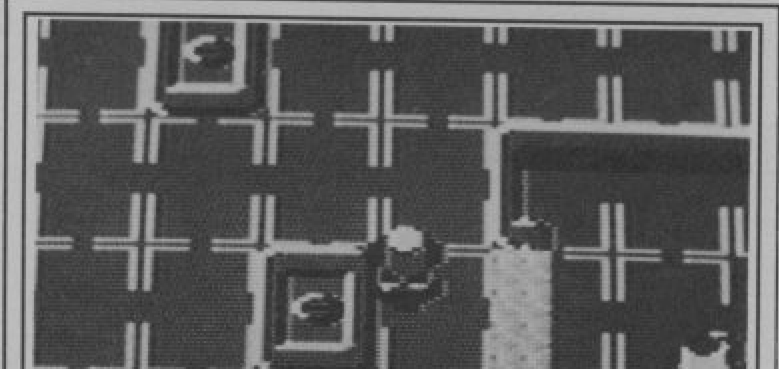
Tony Dillon



"Dare you open the box?" Don't bother — it's not worth the effort.



Pandora: *full of wind . . .*



PANDORA	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1–10)
Video	4
Audio	4
Toughness	8
Endurance	3
VFM	2

CU RATING: 3

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GEE BEE AIR RALLY

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Activision
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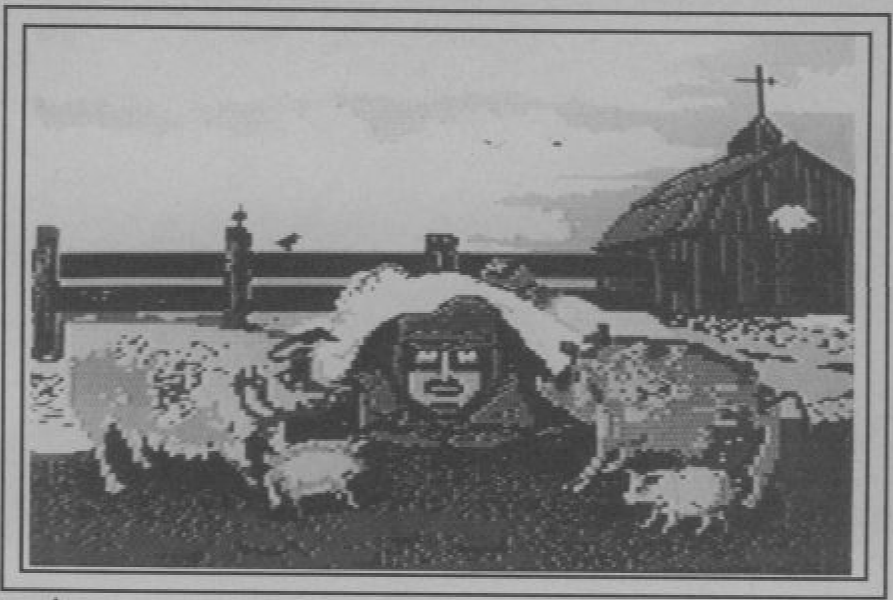
This little nostalgia trip from Activision invites you to don your goggles, climb into the cockpit of a Gee Bee speed plane, and risk life and limb in an epic air rally of the 1930s.

From the dramatic cover illustration and the information on the back of the pack, you can see that the Gee Bee plane was an ugly stubby craft which certainly had no right to defy the laws of gravity. The leading speed plane of its time, it boasted an enormous engine and fuel tank, no rudder or flaps to speak of, and was shaped like 'an apple barrel with wings'.

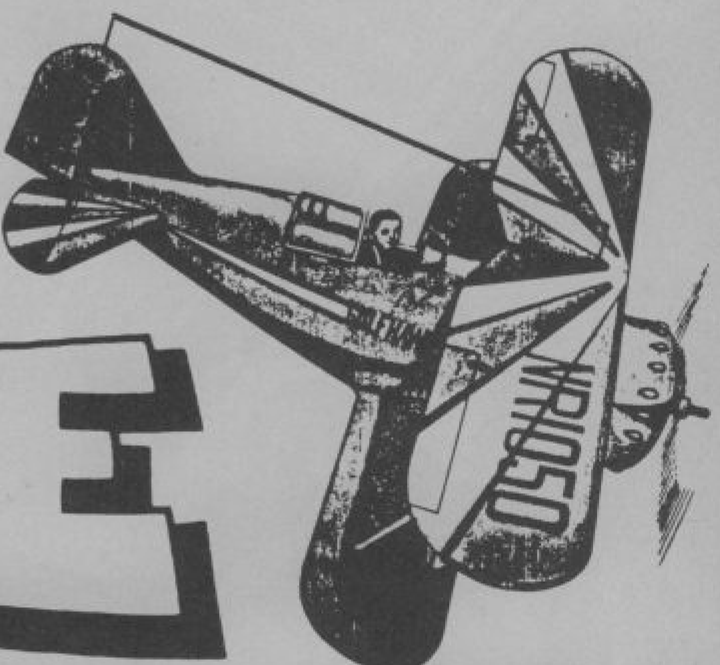
But if you think you're in for an entirely new aerial experience, one glance at the opening screen will put your mind at rest. It's kind of reassuring that even 50 years ago, aviators competed over the same entirely barren striped desert, surrounded by distant mountains, that has been the traditional landscape for almost every flight sim and dogfight game.

Across this candy-striped terrain the course is marked out with chequered towers and pylons and, like a race track, it includes straight stretches as well as wide and tight bends. You push the throttle (fire button), pull back on the joystick, and your yellow Gee Bee takes to the air. In next to no time you're banking and weaving around the course, flying around, over or under the other competitiors, trying not to stray too far off course, and keeping your speed up all the way to the finishing line.

The cockpit controls are simple — altimeter, compass and speedometer — but mostly just for show. All you've got to do is keep your eyes glued to the screen to avoid obstacles and keep on course.



▲ *Oh dear. In the sh — er, sty.*



Once airborne, you hardly use the throttle, and speed can be increased by diving or slowed by climbing.

You've got little over a minute to complete each course, and precious seconds are wasted by losing your way or colliding with another plane.

If you crack-up in mid-air, you bail out, and come to earth in a variety of embarrassing situations — head down in pig-swill, dangling from a tree, or gazing up at the strapping thighs of some Ohio farm wench.

If you cross the finishing line, a proportion of any time left over is carried over to the next event, as well as a bonus score. The instructions promise eight levels of four courses each, but most of the courses look pretty similar, with only the colour of the scenery and the number of bends changing. The exception is the fourth course in every level, which is either a slalom or a balloon-popping event. The landscape is still boring, but at least the action is slightly different.

Criticisms apart, the game succeeds in being curiously addictive, in exactly the same way as all those motor-racing arcade games. Responsive controls and fluid movement go a long way in making up for the dreary scenery, and the masking techniques are pretty impressive — you really can fly under and over the other planes.

Ultimately, though, and despite all the 'humorous' parachute interludes, Activision has failed to disguise the fact that *Gee Bee Air Rally* is still the same old scrolling racing game dressed up in new clothes.

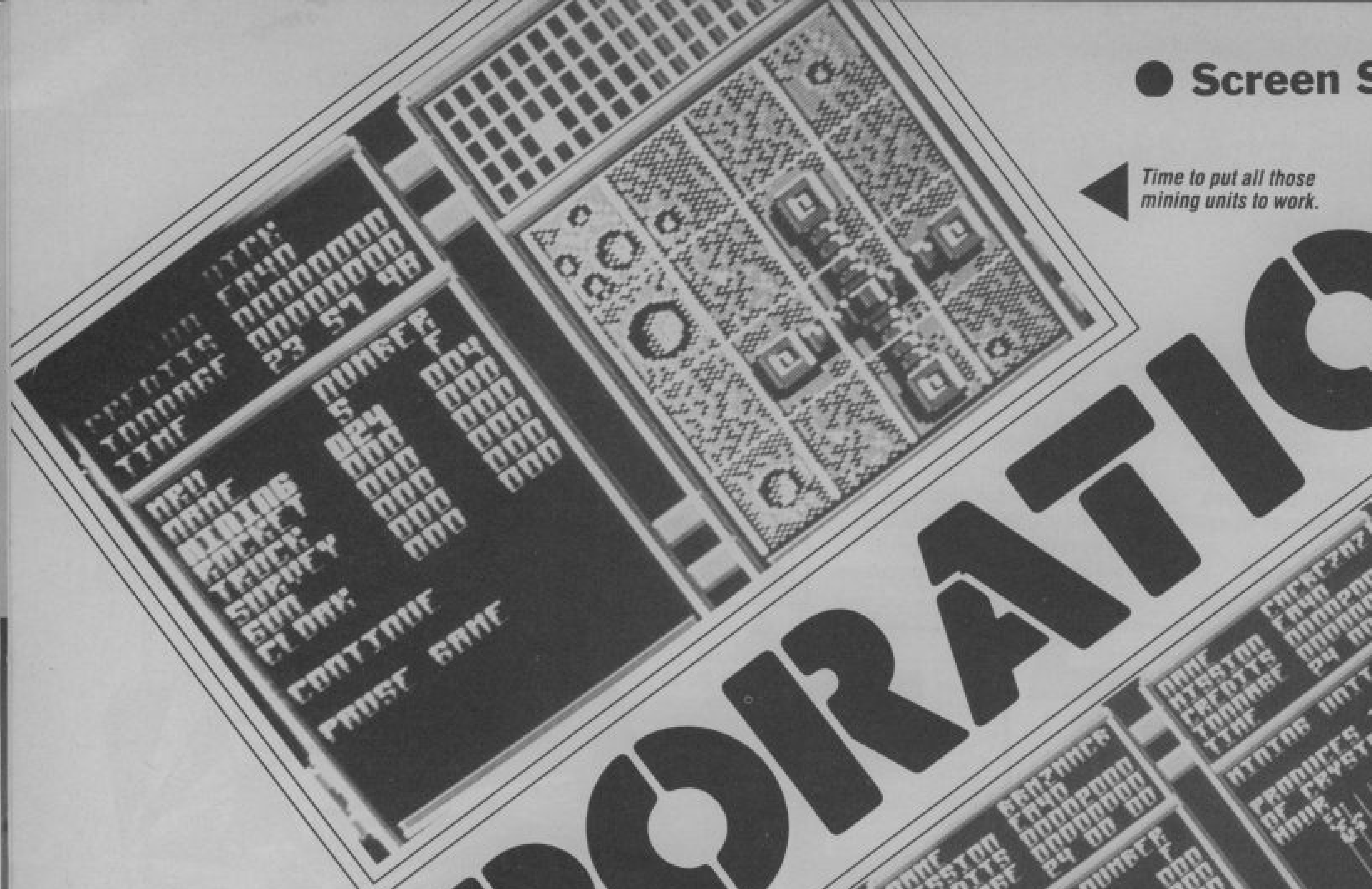
Bill Scolding

▼ *Low speed spills and thrills with few frills.*



GEE BEE AIR RALLY — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	Rating (1–10)
Video	7
Audio	5
Toughness	7
Endurance	5
VFM	6
CU RATING	**6**



Time to put all those mining units to work.



2000 creds to spend — blow it all on rocket launchers.

CORPORATION

64/128
Activision
Price: £9.99/cass £14.99/disk

It looked promising. Interstellar economic struggle in the 31st century. A no holds barred, Thatcherite struggle for supremacy between megacorporations where the only thing that mattered was your job and the only way to keep your job was to mine minorthian crystal.

The year is 3026. The welfare state has been out of a job for more than a millenium. These days a job means more than a salary, it means survival — for which read, in addition to a monthly salary, lifelong BUPA family membership, Access, Visa AMEX and Debenhams credit cards, a company shuttle and somewhere to live. In a world where a P45 is a death warrant, it's dig or die.

You are the commander of a deep space mining vehicle and have been assigned the task of extracting as much minorthian crystal as is humanly possible from a selected planet.

This leads to one small complication. When you touch down on the planet surface so does the competition and it's a race against time to devestate the planet, decimate the competition and put in for a rise while the going's good.

The game loads in three sections. First you get jazzed-up instructions on screen, which seems a bit of a waste of time as it's all written down for you. Anyway, this stuff gives you the background detail, mission briefing, refinery specifications and MRU specifications. MRUs are your remote controlled vehicles, trucks, mining vehicles, survey vehicles, rocket launchers and so on.

Next up you have to buy your gear. You get x thousand creds and have to make all sorts of megacorporate management decisions as to how to spend the dosh to best effect, ie: do I buy lots of survey vehicles, find the gold, dig it up and go home, or blow the whole bundle on rocket launchers, blow the opposition to bits and nick the fruits of their labour?

Stage Three takes place on the planet surface. Now it's time to position your MRUs to survey, dig, collect, refine, defend, attack, whatever. At the end of the day, if you haven't made the quota you get flogged to within an inch of your life, your credit cards are confiscated, no more free dental care for the kids and the family pets are inhumanely put down. If you succeed you get to have another go — a worse deal all round for everyone but the pets.

You've probably guessed by now that *Corporation* is the wildest thing around since crochet lost its allure. To say it's tedious wouldn't be doing it justice, so lets just say that, given the choice of playing *Corporation* or watching a full episode of Bob says Opportunity Knocks, Bob only just loses out.

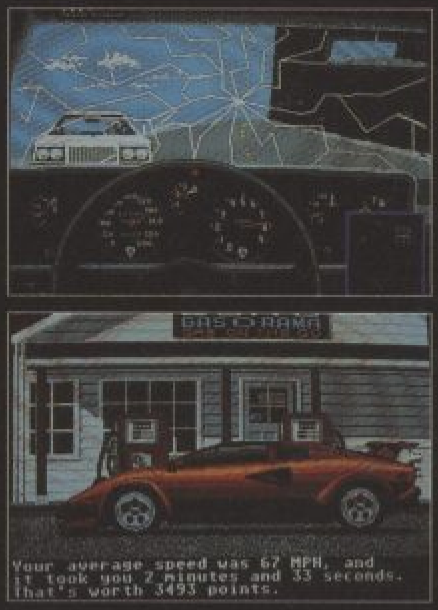
Ken McMahon



CORPORATION

TEST DRIVE

1 | 2 | 50 | 99 | 100



AMIGA

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C64 CASSETTE

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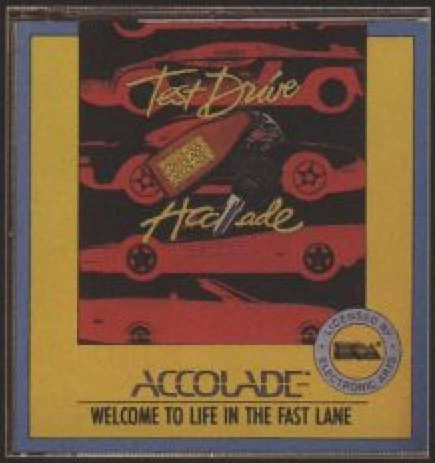
IBM



TEST DRIVE

Test Drive is different - a new standard of driving simulation game. You're probably thinking "that's what they all say". So don't listen to us. Read what Commodore User and Popular Computing Weekly said — "never have I encountered a game where the introductory screens make me want to play the game as much as this one". C.U. "…the graphics are out of this world. For any car enthusiast the game is essential. P.C.W.





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CYBERNOID

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Cybernoid may be considered by most to be the follow up to Raffaele Cecco's previous work, the rather dull *Exolon*. But it turns out to be more of a clone of his ageing arcade adventure *Equinox* (remember that?).

The plot has it that federation storage depots have been raided by space pirates and that you have been commissioned to retrieve as much of the minerals, jewels, ammunition and weaponry as possible, and then return them to a storage depot within a set time.

The pirate craft have also activated the planetary defence systems so you have to deal with them as well. If you fail to reach a depot in the time limit, or reach a depot without enough cargo you forfeit one of your ships.

Cybernoid is a flip screen shoot 'em up with only one exit from each room (you can't go backwards). In some rooms you ca find some damn hard locations which require precision timing to get past.

The stolen booty is collected by blasting the pirate ships. Most of them drop something, sometimes extra weaponry for your Cyber-craft. You also start the game with a varied arsenal; bombs (or jet

Loadsa pretty graphics here . . .





Negotiate this tricky bit and get thr . . .



. . . so you can blow up the plan . . .

propelled grenades), Impact Mines (guaranteed to shake off the most persistant pirates), Defence Shield (temporary invulnerability), Bounce Bombs (four balls which bounce around the screen destroying everything in their paths), and Seekers (missiles which home in on gun emplacements).

As well as the standard weapons you can collect an indestructable mace which whizzes around your ship destroying anything on contact. In case you feel a little breezy behind you can collect a rear firing laser which happily blasts away until your death.

The backdrops are fantastic; well thought out and coloured. Some of the big gun emplacements are really effective as well, even if they do look rather organic. The best graphic effect in *Cybernoid* occurs when you blow up a large piece of the landscape with a missile. A huge explosion goes off with loads of little chunks of debris flying everywhere.

The music accompanying the game can only be described as psychedelic but wonderful, with great use of filters. The sound effects are pretty hot too, and give a great feel when blasting the pirates.

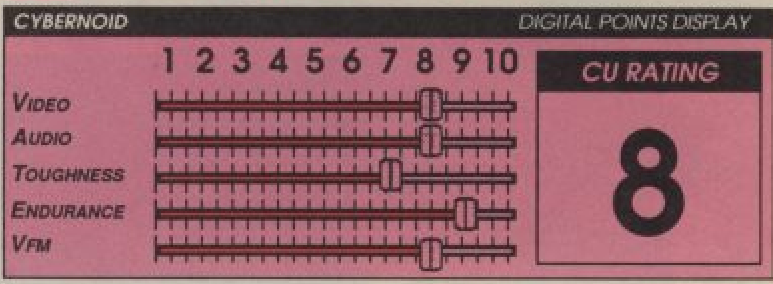
Cybernoid is one of the few shoot 'em ups I have really enjoyed in the past few months. It has a perfect balance between difficulty and playability, being able to grab and hold the player's attention for a long while.

It has been said by many before me, but take it from me (as I write this in the wee hours) this will definitely keep you up an' playin' for many months to come.

Mark Patterson

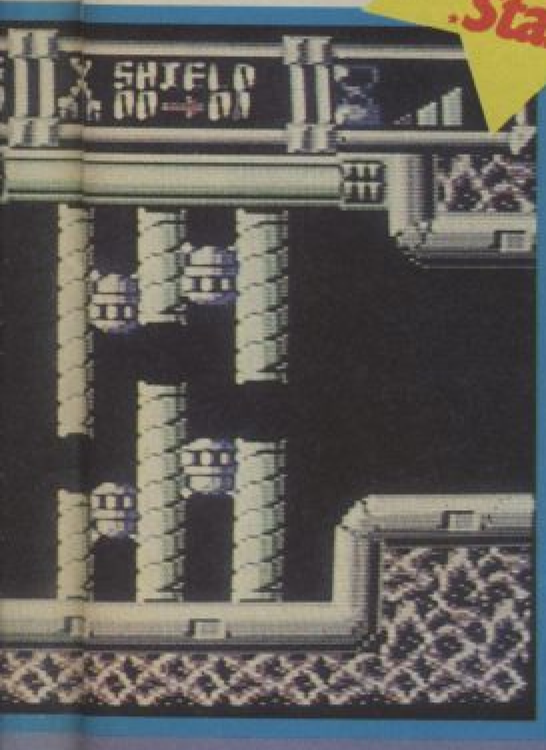


One of the big green bullet-spewing aliens.





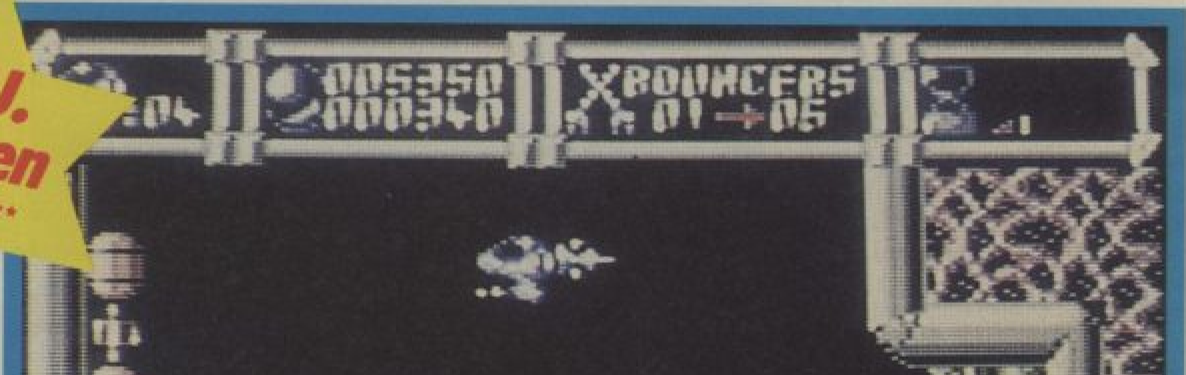
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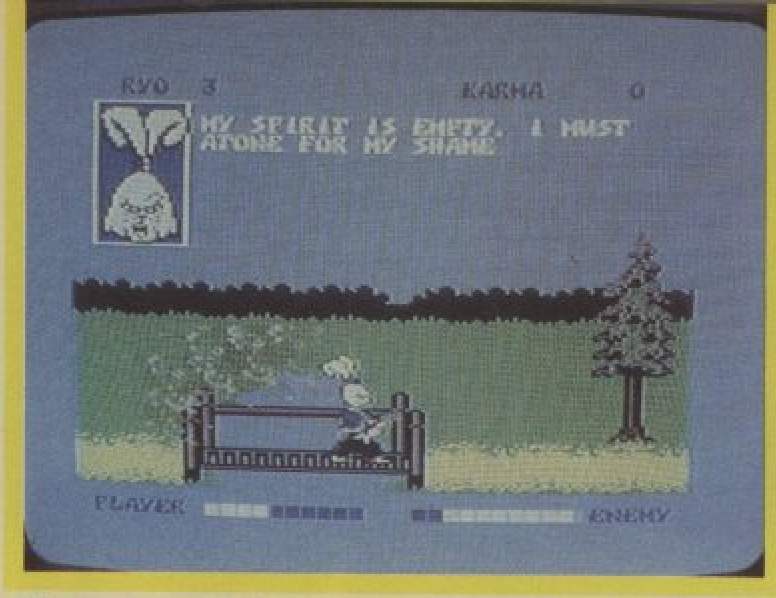


...int amidst this lovverly explosion.

C.U. Screen Star

Watch out for the missiles.





Ninja bunny hops in.



SAMURAI WARRIOR



Usagi gets nasty.

64/128
Firebird
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£8.95/cass
£14.95/disk



Er, what's up Doc?

Samurai Warrior is a bit like a violent version of Watership Down, set in 17th century feudal Japan. The main character is a rabbit called Myamoto Usagi — Usagi Yojimbo to his friends. Usagi must rescue his old friend Lord Noriyuki (a panda) before he is killed by Lord Hikji, probably a pig, but I'm only guessing.

Usagi's journey begins at the far left of the screen and continues westwards as far as he can go. The beautiful scenery of feudal Japan scrolls by behind him as he sets about his search for his panda pal. Usagi is a Samurai, and this means that as well as killing people he takes a dislike to, he must also observe the Japanese rules of etiquette and bow to the right people — if you're not going to kill someone, where's the harm in being polite?

Usagi operates in two modes: peaceful mode, and the one where he waves a sword around. Generally speaking, it pays to walk around in peaceful mode and draw your sword only when things look bad. Otherwise people will get the wrong idea and attack you before you have the chance to shout "hang on a minute — I was only cleaning it!"

So the idea is that you walk around being nice and peaceful, waiting for things to happen. The first thing that happens isn't tremendously exciting — a peasant bows, being polite, you bow back and move on your way. Things quickly hot up though, and before you know it ninjas are jumping out of trees all over the place. Once Usagi unsheathes his sword he is in battle mode, which means he can do all the usual acrobatic stuff — leaping forwards and backwards, charging with sword upraised and so on.

Using the sword itself is very straightforward and there is a practice mode if you need to sharpen your skills. Split second timing on the firebutton is required. A quick jab on the button produces a parry, hold for a fraction and you get a side-swipe, a slightly longer delay prior to release will give you an impressive overhead cut. It doesn't take long to get the hang of it.

In traditional samurai style, every time you take a hit the energy meter goes down a few notches. Opponents have an energy meter too, but fortunately they usually start off with fewer notches than you. Even so, it's essential to finish off the ninja speedily as it may be some time before you can eat and restore your strength — more difficult battles lie ahead.

It's not all ninjas jumping out of trees. Other, friendly passers by can give you inscrutable bits of information like "the first and the last, are they not the same?" More useful is "there are ninja hiding in the woods" though I'm not sure about "if you see the buddha on the path, kill him", as I never saw him.

Don't be tempted to chop the head off a friendly stranger or passing priest just for the hell of it. Such acts of violence will do your karma no good whatsoever. It starts off at a pretty low level anyhow, although you can increase it by killing villains and generally being nice to people. Should it drop below zero, there is only one honourable way out — hari kiri.

If you make it beyond the first level, which culminates with a fearful dragon, you get the chance to go into town for some nosh. Once refreshed, you can continue on your travels and encounter more adversaries including other rabbits, pigs, and all manner of wildlife.

Samurai Warrior is a leap forward from last year's bunch of oriental beat 'em ups. Combat animation is the best I've seen, with oriental music as well as sound effects to match. There's much more to it than learning 16 different joystick movements by heart.

Ken McMahon

SAMURAI WARRIOR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	9
Audio	8
Toughness	7
Endurance	8
VFM	8

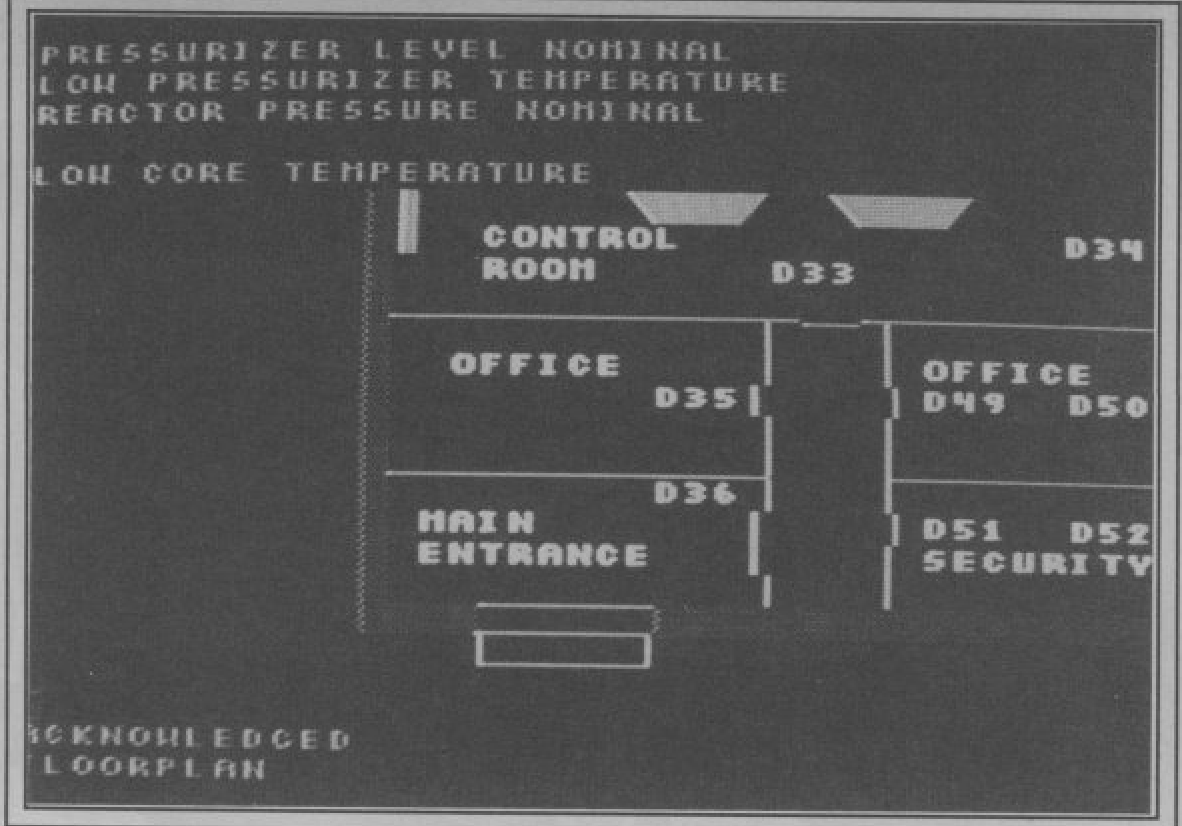
CU RATING

8



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So now you know your way around a nuclear reactor.

CHERNOBYL

The packaging for *The Chernobyl Syndrome* is pretty sensational: a silhouetted figure, lab coat flying, diving for cover as the nuclear power station in the background explodes into an inferno. On the back of the pack the game is described as (deep voice) "A drama and challenge of chilling realism and awesome consequences".

Wow! This is obviously going to be one of those action-packed suspense-filled jobs which puts you in the hot seat, struggling to save the world as the seconds tick inexorably towards meltdown.

And so, pulse racing, you load in the program, and while you're waiting for the fun to begin, you have a quick decko at the instructions. This is where you get your first shock: what you're looking at is over 10,000 words of text printed in a typeface so small it's going to do your eyes some *serious* damage.

Putting that to one side, you turn to the other sheet, the one that lists the command words and function keys that you need to play the game. This one doesn't look too awful; discounting the French and German translations, there probably aren't more than 2000 words all told. These include 40 or so command words (though many of them duplicate each other), 14 sets of function keys, 30 library words, a 15-stage power-up procedure, a 16-stage shutdown procedure, the 21 nominal levels for the power gauges, and four lengthy emergency scenarios.

Sweating a bit by now, you decide to give it a whirl, and type in the command which puts nuclear power plant ON LINE. The black screen displays a sequence of mysterious computer-generated messages, but before you attempt to initiate the various stages of the power-up procedure, alarm bells are sounding, and the computer is requesting POWER LEVEL TO 100%. And it's now that you get your second shock: you don't know what the hell you're doing.

It looks like there's nothing else for it — you're going to have to do some homework. About a third of the text supplied is actually readable, describing the events preceding and following the Chernobyl disaster two years ago. It's the stuff of nightmares, but doesn't get you any closer to playing the game.

The rest, however, is heavy going, being a detailed explanation of how a nuclear plant actually works, right down to the nitty-gritty of zirconium tubes, sub-atomic particles, reactivity levels and neutron absorbers. It's all very fascinating, at about the level of a physics degree paper, but still lacks any immediate relevance to gameplay.

Somehow, carried away by his own enthusiasm for the subject, programmer Paul Norman (yes, it's that man again!) has, either wilfully or accidentally, avoided any plain-talking instructions for playing *The Chernobyl Syndrome.* Even the list of power-up procedures is unhelpful. "Withdraw control rods to x degree" it states. How? "Use generators to achieve approximate power output level requested". How?

The Chernobyl Syndrome is, quite possibly, an authentic simulation of what it is like to operate a nuclear power reactor, though it's unlikely that any of us will ever know for sure. What *is* certain, however, is that it is one of the most unfriendly and impenetrable programs you'll encounter. Its one saving grace is that it has almost no graphics, which, to judge from Norman's previous artistic efforts, has to be a Good Thing.

So, if you *really* want to save the world from a nuclear disaster, then give this one a miss and take out a subscription to Greenpeace instead. You know it makes sense.

Bill Scolding



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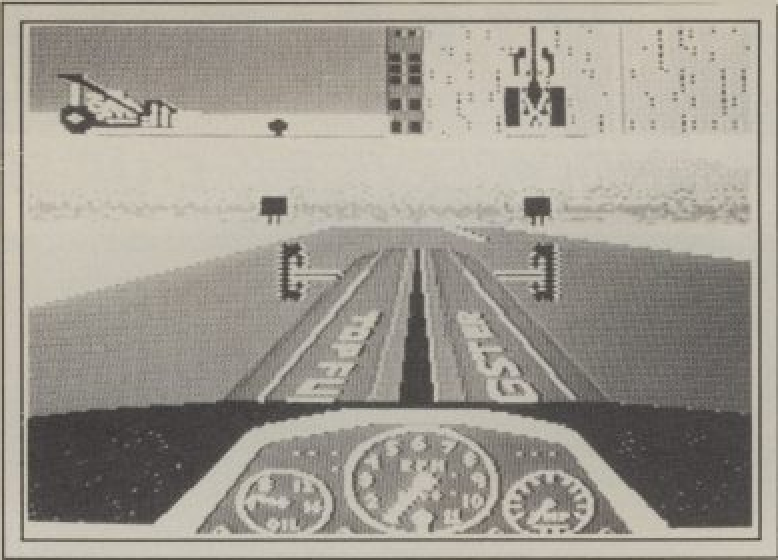
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Maybe no-one's told US Gold, but there are some of us to whom Shirley Muldowney isn't exactly a household name. We don't know peanuts about drag racing, and think that "redlighting" and "smoking your tyres" are probably illegal and almost certainly subversive. So we're not going to start drooling all over the keyboard at the mere mention of *Top Fuel Challenge.*

It appears that drag racing involves driving very long cars at very high speeds over a very short distance. The cars have tiny bicycle tyres at the pointed end, and enormous tractor-like treads at the rear, and hit speeds of over 250mph within split-seconds of leaving the start line. They compete in races that are over in less time than it takes you to read this sentence, and their velocity is such that they need parachutes to help them stop.



▲ *Vroom, Vroom . . . Ho hum. Nothing racey about this one.*

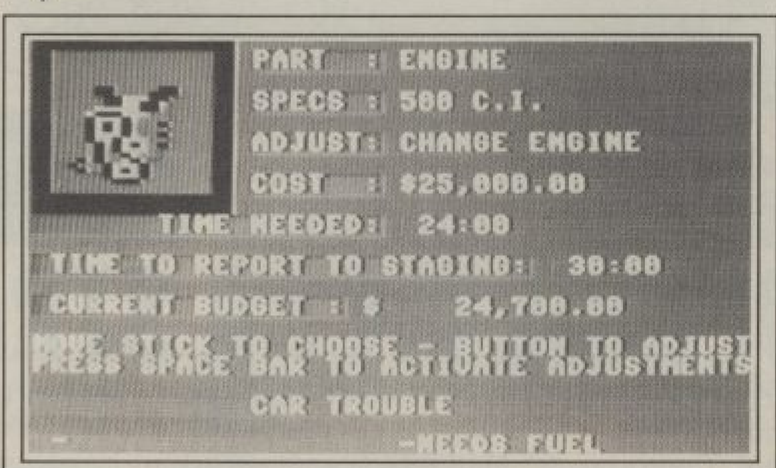
Shirley Muldowney's TOP FUEL CHALLENGE

Not surprisingly, a career in drag racing is one pursued only by dedicated nutters who don't mind losing the odd limb or two. Shirley Muldowney will bear witness to that, having been rebuilt more extensively than the Bionic Woman. Still, determination will win through, and our Shirl is, according to the press cuttings included in the pack, "the winningest woman in drag racing history and three time World Champion". Well worth the price of five broken fingers, a severed thumb, a broken right hand, pelvis, right leg, left foot and marriage.

Don't worry though — playing *Top Fuel Challenge* on your 64 isn't likely to damage anything other than your wallet and your brain. And though the adverts insist that you will "recoil from the heat of your turbos" and "feel the snap of the G-Force", they are, in fact, a wee bit exaggerated. Recoil from the stupifying boredom and feel the snap of your temper would be more accurate.

A racing simulating which lasts less than 10 seconds doesn't sound too promising for starters. In practice the game involves a hell of a lot of foreplay before reaching each brief, unsatisfactory, climax. A series of tedious pre-qualifying screens, listing current events, locations and prize money, followed by information about track conditions and maintenance menus, must all be waded through before you even get behind the steering wheel.

▼ *That's an engine!?*



At this point you're required to achieve a few "burnouts". The grossly inadequate instructions explain that these are intended to "heat and clean drive tyre rubber" prior to a run but fail to tell you how to do this. So you'll spend a merry time either stalling your engine or blowing it up as you juggle with the joystick and fire button, attempting to build up the revs and ease out the clutch. Each abortive burnout results in prompt disqualification, and after several screens displaying the results of races in which you haven't competed, it's back to the garage for maintenance again, to replace engine and tyres and top up with fuel.

Should you succeed in achieving burnout (a certain amount of luck, plus a phone call to US Gold's technical department, will help), you've still got to complete a qualifying run before facing your competitor. No information is given about this at all, other than a description of the peculiar "Christmas Tree" of electronic starting lights, and it will be some time before you even realise you've crossed the finishing line. Chances are you'll either redlight (start prematurely), blow your engine or simply drive too slowly to qualify. And then it's back to the maintenance sheds again.

The graphics are by Paul *Super Huey* Norman, and are up to his usual standard (i.e. abysmal). Look out for the epileptic pedestrians on the Track Conditions screen, and the self-portrait of Picasso which accompanies "Maintenance" is another unexpected delight. Sound effects are limited but appropriate, and are at least better than the god-awful animation.

Still, despite the lack of useful instructions, demo mode and any kind of professional polish at all, *Top Fuel Challenge* does succeed in being authentic in one respect.

It's a real drag.

Bill Scolding

TOP FUEL CHALLENGE — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	3
Audio	4
Toughness	9
Endurance	2
VFM	2

CU RATING
3



IMPOSSIBLE

64/128
Epyx/
US Gold
Price:
£9.99/cass
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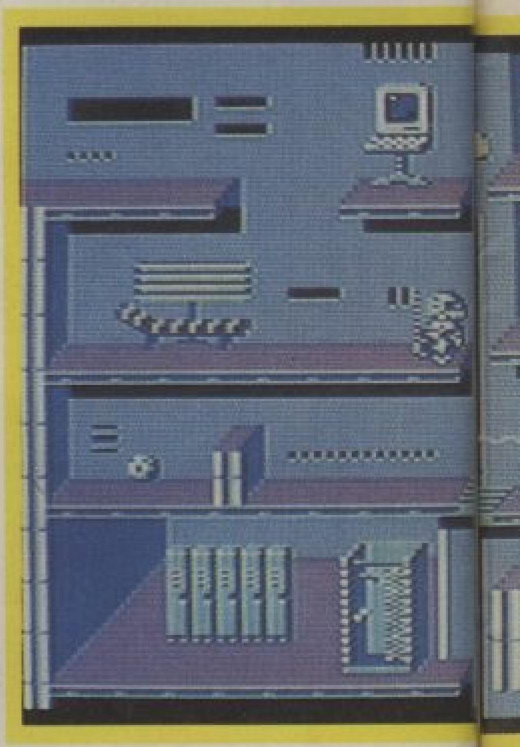
Another visitor. Stay a while. Staaay forevah! Elvin Atombender's ominous greeting first chilled and thrilled the hearts of gamesplayers almost five years ago in Dennis Caswell's *Impossible Mission*. It was unaminously acclaimed as one of the best computer games ever written, and its graphics and sound alone put virtually every other computer game to shame. Even now it leaves a lot of software in the shade. Producing a sequel for something that was so ahead of its time is a tall order, which probably explains why it's taken so long for a follow-up to arrive.

Once again the mad professor is hell-bent on destroying the world, and once again it's up to you to stop him. This time however, you've got eight hours, real time, to prevent a global disaster. The gameplay is much the same as before. Taking control of agent 4126, whose appearance doesn't seem to have changed a great deal since we last met (in fact it's the same sprite), you have to run and somersault around Elvin's lair, negotiating devious platform arrangements, avoiding robots and searching items of furniture.

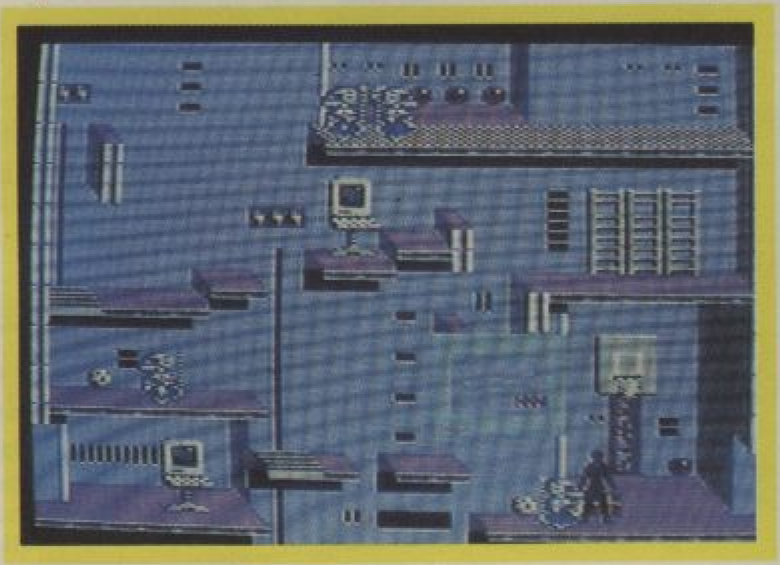
The ultimate aim is to enter Elvin's control room and shut down his computer. But to get to this room you've got to collect six different variations of a tune. The tunes are kept in safes, one in each of the eight towers surrounding Elvin's control room. To access each tower you need to collect numbers, found in objects in the rooms in the towers, and assemble a three-digit pass code.

The tunes and PINs are stored in your pocket computer — basically a modified version of the one used in the previous mission. This handy device, displayed at the bottom of the screen when in the corridors, also shows your position in the complex by means of a mini-map.

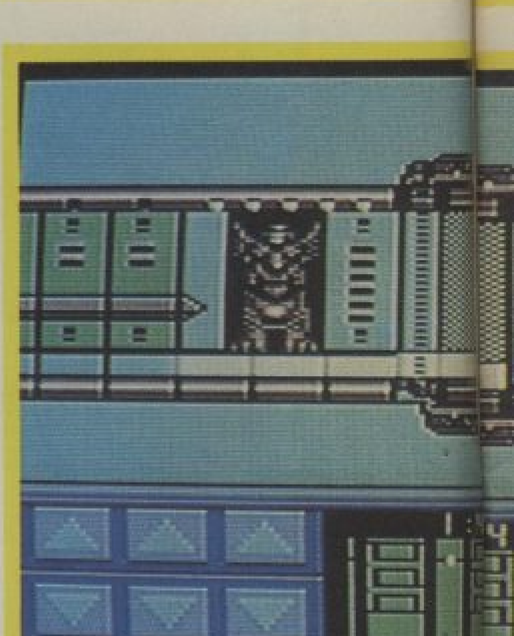
Terminals are dotted throughout the complex, and logging on to one allows you to use any commands accumulated during your search. The robots can be temporarily shut down as before, and any moving platforms moved back to their original positions. There are also a few new commands, such as the facility to move certain areas of floor, and light bulbs to illuminate any dark rooms in the tower, plus

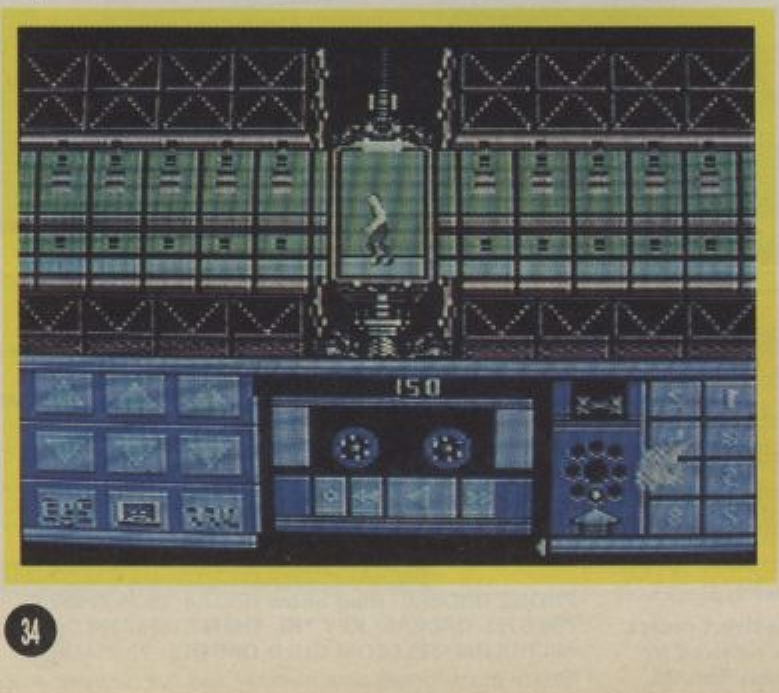


Frazzled by a Sentrybot.



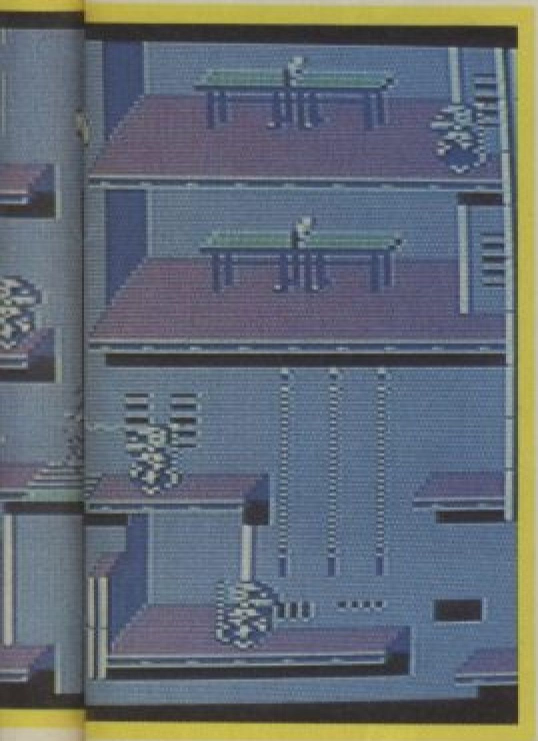
Ouch! Caught in the act . . .

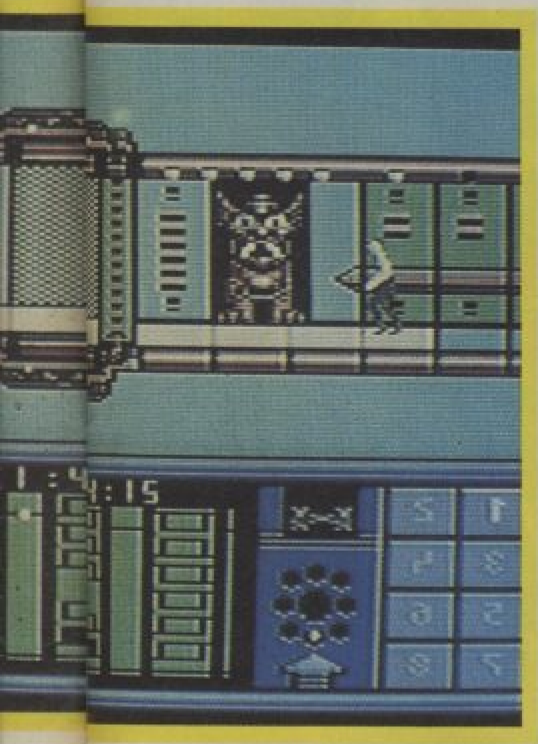




Tape recorder titters . . .

MISSION 2





You need the three-digit code to get past here.

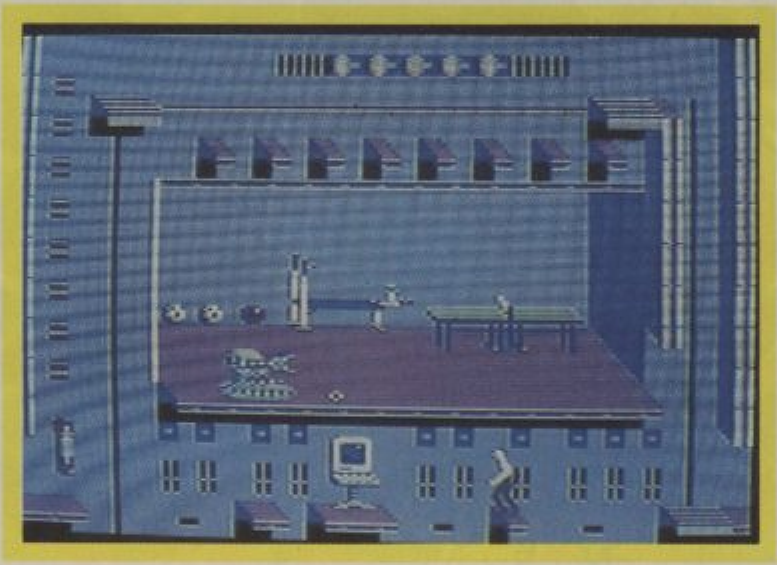
two types of explosive: time bombs and mines. Time bombs are the most useful of the two as they can be used to blow holes in the floor to reach previously inaccessable areas, and, more importantly, they blow open safes, allowing you to get the tunes. Mines simply destroy anything that makes contact — and that includes you.

The robots behave much the same as before, although there are five new types to contend with. *Pestbots* are harmless enough, but present their (un)fair share of problems by moving lifts, and *Minebots* do as their name suggests. *Squatbots* simply sit on the floor, moving up and down, and can be used as stepping stones, while *Bashbots* given the chance, push you off platforms and *Suicidebots* usually end up falling off with you.

One of the trickier rooms to negotiate.

Other problems encountered include rooms which can only be tackled from one side, and rooms which you can only escape from by dying. Worse still, you can blow up searchable objects, and with them your chances of completing the game. The disk version supports a save game option, but it can only be used in the corridors. Something the instructions neglect to tell you is that pressing the Commodore key (used in conjunction with 5 to save) in a room, kills you. Most unhelpful, really.

Cassette owners will be at a disadvantage as it's unlikely that they will be able to save the game. To make matters worse, there's a lot of disk accessing, which means (ugh) a multiload cassette version. Why it's not a single load like the original I don't know.



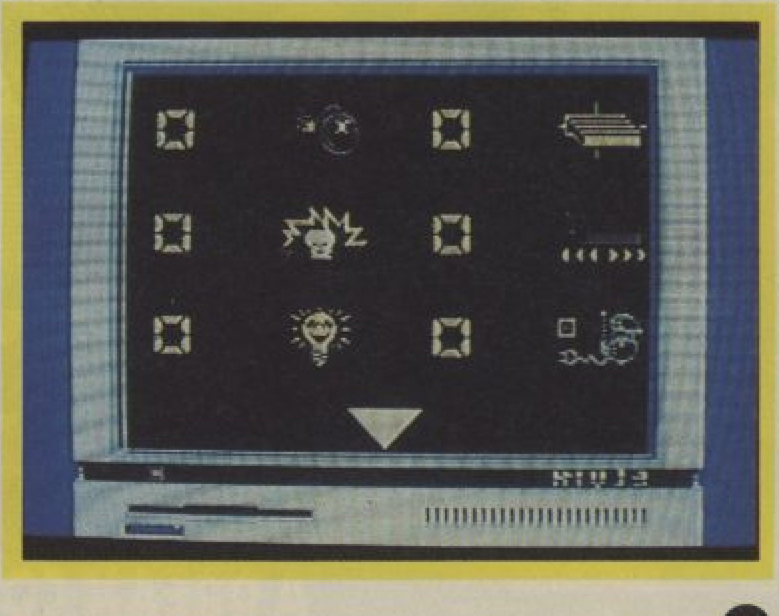
You can only play one tower at a time, which is usually only six rooms — and this is one of *Impossible mission II*'s biggest flaws. At least in the original you could explore the rest of the complex if you got p'd off with a particular room. To make matters worse, if you run out of time before choosing the correct computer in the control room, you have to start from scratch and that's hours of play wasted.

The puzzle aspect isn't as strong either. The PINs are easily solved once you've got all the numbers, and there's no brainwork involved in piecing together the tunes. Sad, as this is one element which made *Impossible Mission* a cut above the rest.

It makes me wonder what's happened to Epyx. When they produced a sequel to *Summer Games* it was significantly different in virtually all aspects. They didn't re-use the same sprites and sounds — they improved on them. So why make *Impossible Mission II* so similar to its predecessor? Admittedly it's too good a formula to put to waste, but I was expecting something more than this.

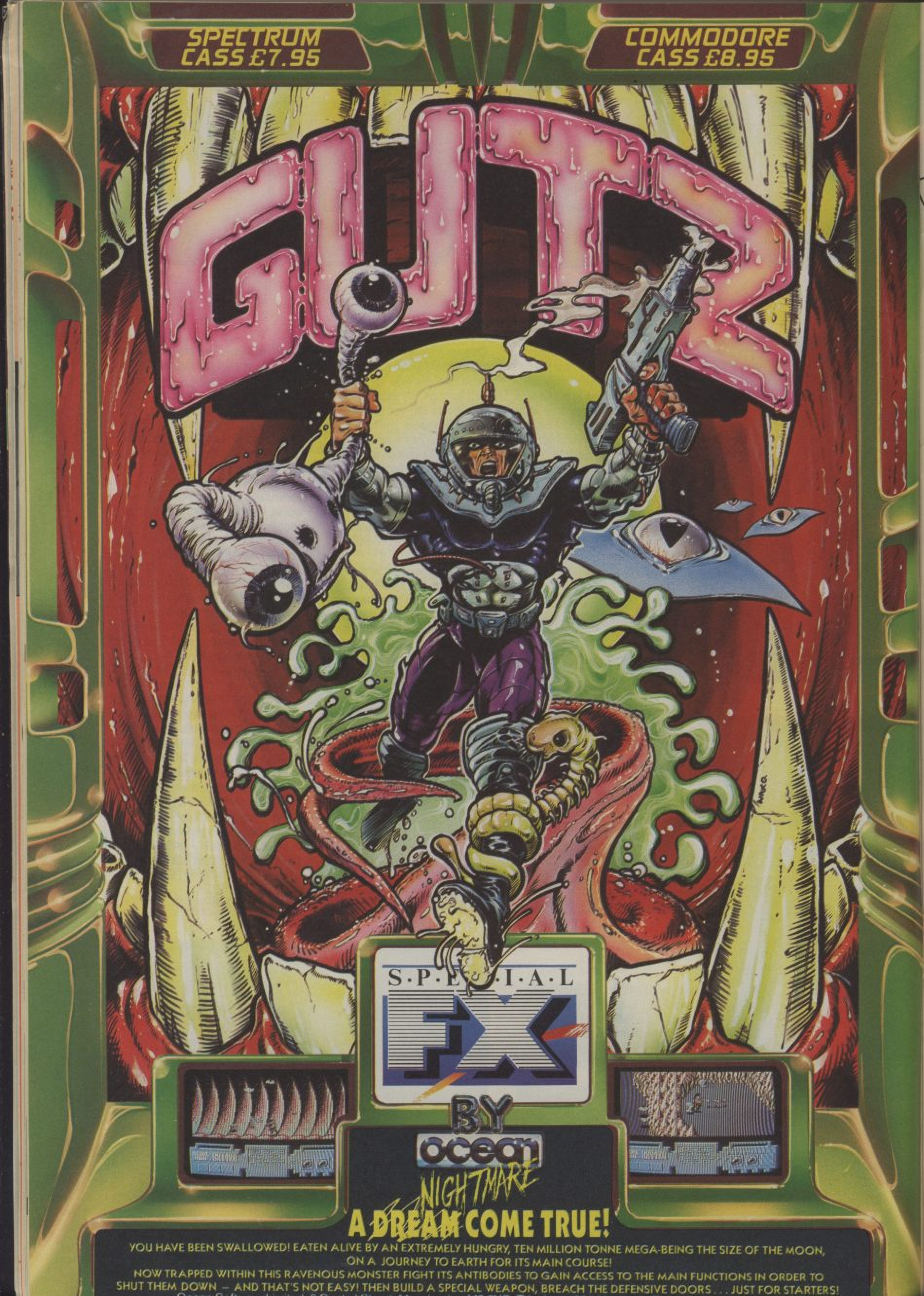
Gary Penn

Plenty of console chuckles here, chums!

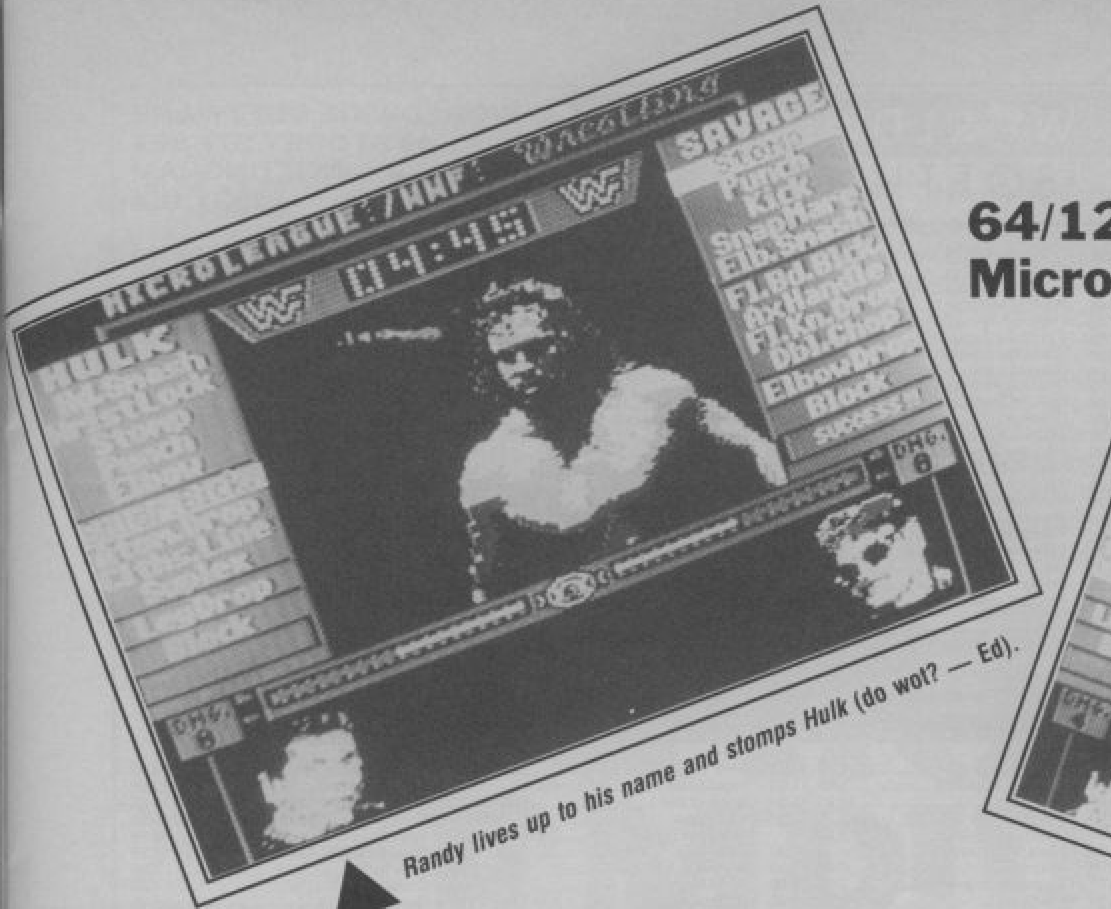


IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY	1–10
Video	7
Audio	8
Toughness	9
Endurance	7
VFM	6

CU RATING: 7



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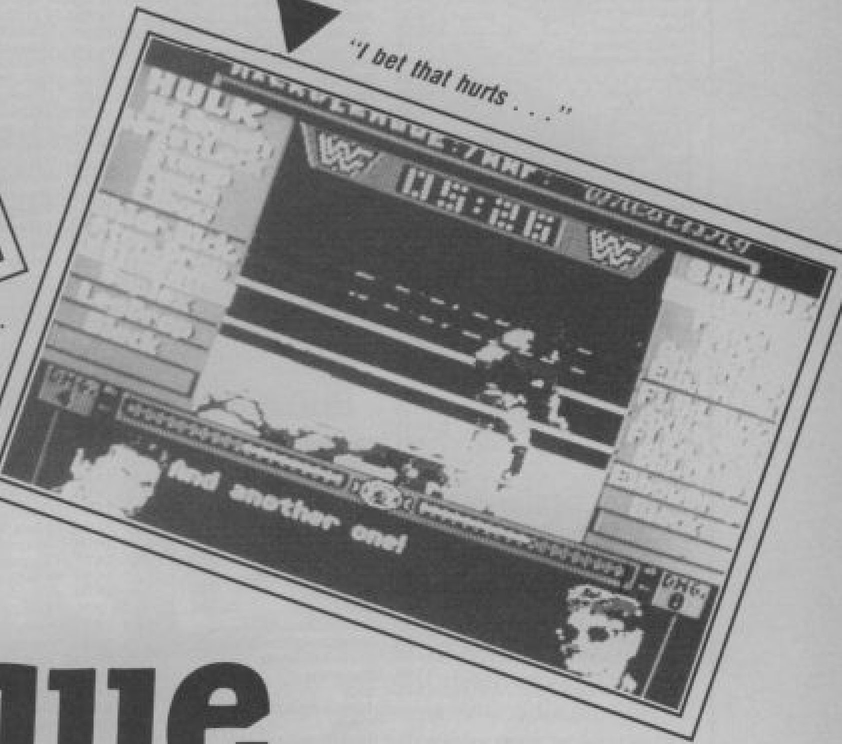


▶ Randy lives up to his name and stomps Hulk (do wot? — Ed).

64/128
Microprose

Price: £19.95
disk only

▶ "I bet that hurts . . ."



Microleague WRESTLING

There's something a bit different about this wrestling game. For a start, it uses yer actual digitised pictures of real wrestlers (eugh) instead of the usual bundles of sprites. Secondly, since there are no sprites to control, there's no grappling to do. This may sound disappointing and, in truth, it's disasterous.

MicroLeague Wrestling is an official product of the World Wrestling Federation. It looks to me as though the WWF know absolutely nothing about computer games. Either that or they've landed on their heads too often. As I was saying, there's no actual combat to control. All you do is choose the moves and watch the two big dumbos carry them out.

But let's introduce the big macho blubber boys themselves. There are three of them: **Hulk Hogan** — blond moustachoed bombshell from California. He's true American grit, he fights clean — he's a nerk. **Randy "Macho Man" Savage** — he's black, he's crucial, he wears shades and a leopard-skin headband — katanga! **Paul "Mr Wonderful" Orndorff** — boring looking bloke from Florida.

The game gives you a choice of only two matches, and Hulk Hogan (for some unknown reason) gets to fight in both of them. This is a one or two player game, so you can choose to be any one of the three against the computer or play an (unwilling) friend.

Before the match, you get an optional sequence of screens that show both men being interviewed by TV wrestling pundit Mean Gene Okenlund (who he?). This amounts to a set of digitised photos in which balding Mean Gene asks highly probing questions and elicits pertinent replies like: "I'm gonna stop that dude in his tracks".

Once you've endured the interview, you get yet another set of digipics showing the referee mouthing like a goldfish and the two fighters making their way to the arena. After what seems like five years, they actually start grappling.

What you get is a Harry Carpenter-type view of the action with a set of eleven moves for each wrestler displayed down both sides of the screen: five easy, four medium and two difficult ones. Most are common to both but some are particular to the fighter. Orndorff, for example, likes the Eye Rake whilst Randy Savage favours the occasional flying Knee Drop.

The strategy (what there is of it) involves choosing a move that has a better probability of success than the opponent's taking into account two factors: power and damage. Each wrestler has a powermeter and a damage display panel. A successful move increases your own power and increases damage points to your opponent. If the points total amassed goes over a critical level, you can go for the pin, and eventual victory. Bouts can last 10 minutes, 20 minutes and even an hour for the Grudge Match.

All three fighters have an option to get them out of trouble if things go badly. Hulk Hogan can get an uplift from the crowd once per bout. The other two get two chances per bout each of doing dirty tricks. That may put them back in the running, but they take the risk of being disqualifed.

Once both of you have chosen a move, the computer decides whose move won and then displays it in a short sequence of digitised pictures to give the appearance of movement. In general, the sequences are very good and are shot from a variety of angles, both from a distance and close-up.

Some of the more complicated moves, like the elbow drop, are done in a set of around five shots beginning with the bloke standing on the top rope and ending with a huge flabby heap on the canvas. Then there's the simplex where the victim actually flies through the air. Simpler moves, like the stomp and punch, are merely two pictures alternating.

Oh, I almost forgot. During the bout, you get a textual commentary on each move from American TV wrestling pundict Vince McMahon (not Ken McMahon's dad), whose digitised face is on the bottom left of the screen. To the right is another digitised face who occasionaly interrupts, a bit like Saint and Greavsie. Vince is a graduate of the Jimmy Hill school of obvious comments: "That atomic drop really hurt Savage" he opines. "There's no love lost here" interjects the Sidekick.

I have mixed feelings about *MicroLeague Wrestling*. Sequences of digitised real pictures to approximate animation is a good idea, and the pictures themselves are very well displayed. Where the game falls down drastically is that there's absolutely nothing for the players to do but choose moves from a short menu. There's no real gameplay and no real challenge involved. Once you've seen all the sequences of moves (and there are quite a few of them) and read all the mind-numbing commentaries, interest soon fades.

Bohdan Buciak

MICROLEAGUE WRESTLING	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1–10)
VIDEO	9
AUDIO	4
TOUGHNESS	3
ENDURANCE	3
VFM	3

CU RATING

4



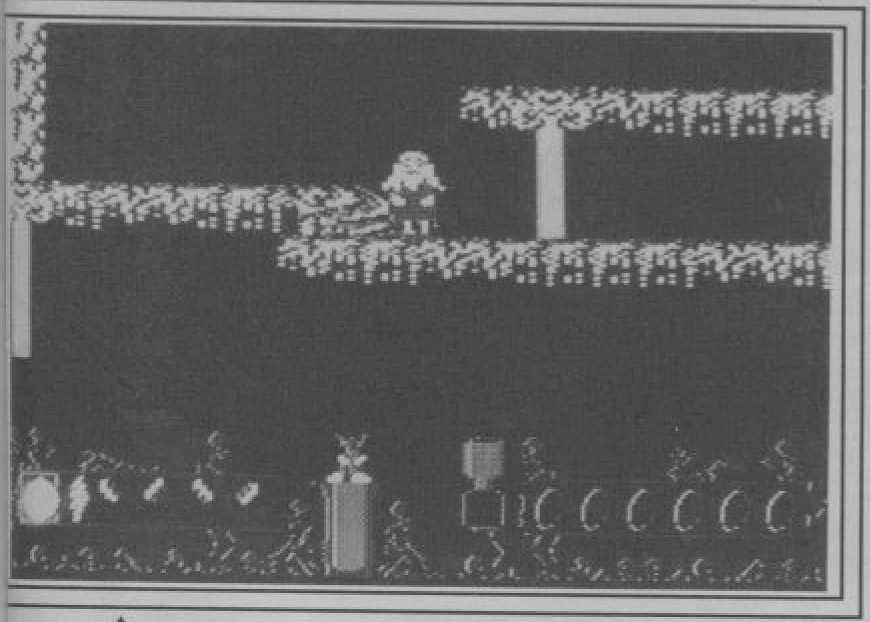
64/128
Magic Bytes/ Gremlin Graphics
Price: £9.99/cass £12.99/disk

VAMPIRE'S EMPIRE



Old Van Helsing is at it again. The doddery vampire- fighter has put aside his pension-book and is off to do battle against Dracula's legions of the undead once more, flinging garlic in all directions like a demented Spanish chef.

This latest round in the struggle between toothless and toothsome comes to us courtesy of European software house Magic Bytes, via our old friends Gremlin Graphics. To all appearances it's a fairly mundane platform maze game, but ol' Van the Man has one or two tricks up his sleeve which introduce an unexpected strategic twist to the proceedings.



▲ *Doddery Van ponders on a platform.*

The game is accompanied by rather more atmospheric scene-setting twaddle than usual, bizarrely translated from the original German, which tells us of the unspeakable horrors to come. Among the 'horrible little sods' who lie in wait for Van Helsing are curly-haired 'blond chaps' who approach from behind ('beware the extreme desires of these rotters!'), 'scoundrels' who play at being 'windmills' (?!!), and female demons 'wearing lots of practically nothing'. What is the geezer prattling on about?

Pausing only for an invocation to the powers of light ('Show me the way for my tottering weary feet and all the rest of the old cobblers'), Van sets off on his subterranean quest, loaded up with garlic, mirrors and a crystal ball.

As he trundles along the pathways, climbing up and falling down stairs, stumbling over rocks and bumping into walls, the various sods and rotters try to make life interesting for him. Some — like the gnome, or the guy in the night-dress — merely bump into him, sucking his ever-dwindling blood supply (displayed below the screen). But there's also a weird bloke who waves his arms about (the windmill?) exerting a magnetic pull, and a comical bouncing ogre.

Van can dispel most of the nasties by lobbing half-a-dozen cloves of garlic in their direction, but on the whole it's better to avoid them. Garlic doesn't however cut much ice with the rats which erupt occasionally from the floor, but a well-aimed sandalled foot should kick these into touch.

There is, fortunately, more to *Vampire Empire* than this. Every now and then Van catches sight of a thing which looks like a throwback to one of those old *Centipede* games, but which is, believe it or not, a beam of light. This floats around, bouncing off the scenery, and somehow he's got to get it moving in the general direction of the exit. This is where the assorted glassware comes in handy.

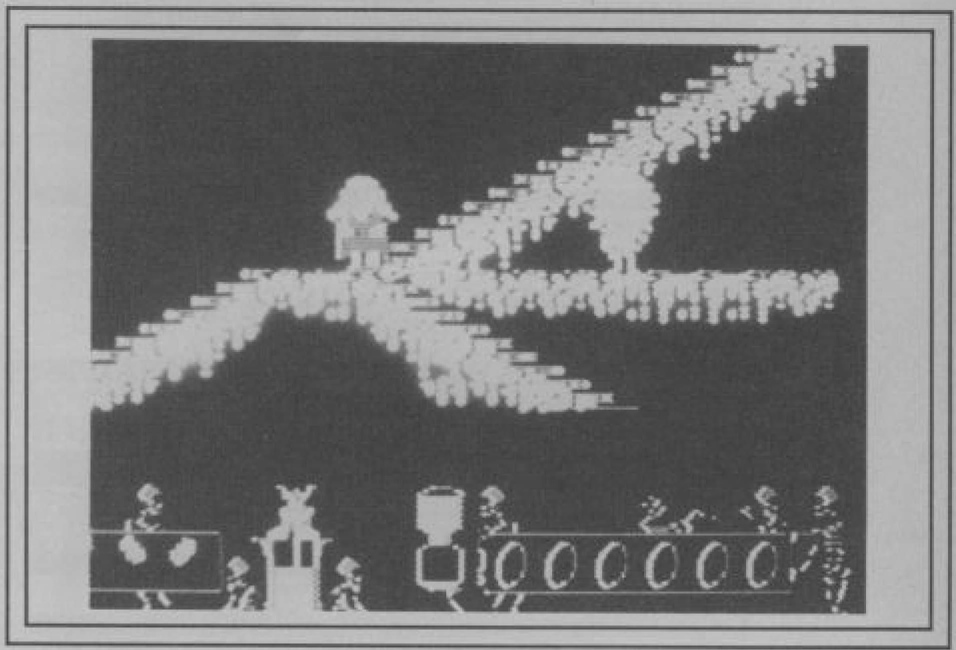
Using the row of icons displayed at the bottom left of the screen, Van can either capture the light in his crystal ball and re-route it, or call up a combination of angled mirrors which he can position in its path, deflecting it around any obstacles or barriers. The idea is that when Van eventually locates the exit block at the east end of the maze, the light beam will follow him there and shine directly onto the block, allowing him to enter the next level.



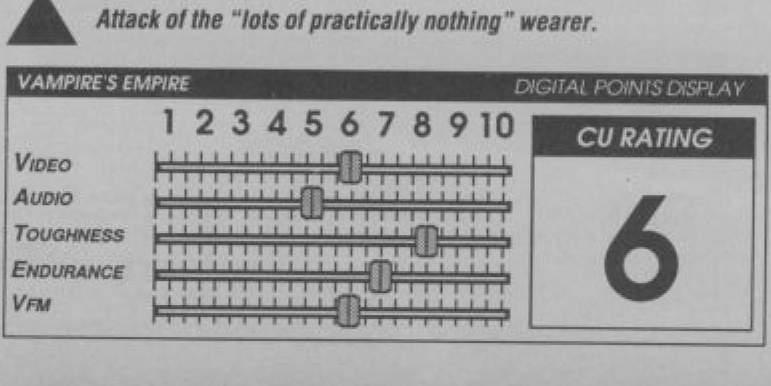
There are four levels in all, and the light has to be successfully directed through all of them, until Van Helsing can get it shining on Dracula's tomb itself. No easy task. More often than not he'll reach an exit with only a few drops of blood left in his veins, only to see the light scuttling off in the opposite direction or, more likely, entirely conspicuous by its absence.

It's an original variation on what is otherwise standard levels-and-ladders fodder, and that in itself is noteworthy. The graphics are cute and serviceable, sound effects limited but adequate, and once you've got used to the exasperating joystick icon access, the game is sufficiently playable. No great shakes, but hardly, to use Van Helsing's French, a load of old cobblers.

Bill Scolding



▲ *Attack of the "lots of practically nothing" wearer.*



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£9.95/cass
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What would any Earth government try and do when a ten-million tonne mega-being the size of a small moon enters planetary orbit around Earth? Send a man up to make contact with it of course! Which is a shame because it's very hungry and it eats you. How are you going to return to Earth and warn them of your deadly discovery?

The only way you can escape is by shutting down the greedy bugger's vital organs (kidney, lung, heart and brain). Each of these organs can be found in their own private level, surrounded by a complex maze of arteries. Through these arteries roam many vile, slimey creatures whose only purpose in life is to prevent foreign bodies (eg: you) from entering the system.

Around the various slurpy bits of the creature you can find extra weaponry to boost the destructive capabilities of your man. Each section of a level is in turn divided into four smaller sections, each with a special type baddie that can only be killed with a special weapon. You can also find protective helmets which prevent any normal nasties from harming you, but their effect is only temporary.

The most useful piece equipment has to be the map. The levels are so big that it is easy to get lost or run past a useful object.

During the four stages of a level you have to collect the three bits of the 'tri-puzzle' weapon. This weapon lowers the protective shield around the organ you are attacking so that it becomes vulnerable to the super-weapon which is held in the same chamber.

The organs are surprisingly articulate and big. The first you come across is the kidney. This wobbles round the chamber after you firing little crab and worm like creatures. If you have collected the crystals from the first level the kidney will run from you, giving you time to grab the super weapon held in a chamber in the far wall.

When the organ has been destroyed all the arteries go dark and a fresh exit from the level appears near the bottom of the screen.

The game takes place mainly on an eight-way scrolling screen, but between the levels you have to traverse a horizontally scrolling tunnel with the nasties bouncing or dive bombing you.

Gutz seems to be a meld of *Alien Syndrome* and *Gryzor*, and only just above par as well. The character graphics are nothing special; the type that appear on most shoot 'em ups. The sound consists of blasts, zaps and squeals.

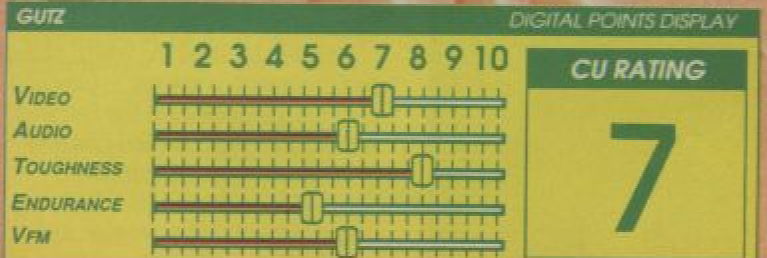
Among the problems with *Gutz* is the weapons collection. On Level One the weapons are concealed behind pods in the wall, pods which are the same colour and almost the same texture as the surrounding backdrops.

If you are a screaming *Alien Syndrome* junkie presently going cold turkey then you should like *Gutz*. Otherwise I can well recommend waiting for the real thing.

Mark Patterson

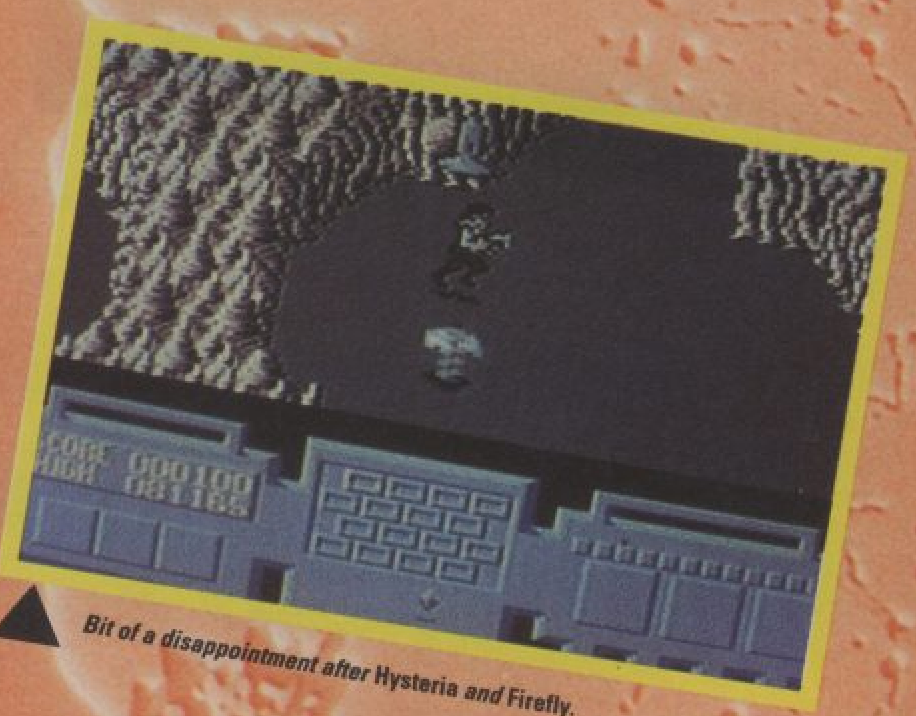


Nice loading screen.





Plenty of fast blasting to be had.



Bit of a disappointment after Hysteria and Firefly.



ALIEN SYNDROME

64/128
Ace
Price:
£9.95/cass
£14.95/disk

Shortly after the advent of Atari's *Gauntlet* in the arcades, Sega jumped on the bandwaggon and released a multi-player game of their own, the vastly inferior shoot 'em up *Quartet.* Sega's next multi-player game was *Alien Syndrome*, which although far superior to *Quartet* did not seem to go down quite as well. But this hasn't put The Edge off acquiring the conversion rights and releasing it under their new(ish) label, Ace.

The plot to *Alien Syndrome* has a nasty alien life force holding your buddies prisoner on a number of large space craft, and it's down to you and/or a mate to rescue them (the 64 version only being two player). So how does the 64 version compare with the arcade original? Surprisingly very well.

You start by selecting which of the two characters you want to play and are then transported to the first ship. Almost straight away you find one of your comrades desperately waving for your attention. Rescuing a person couldn't be simpler; just run into him and he's transported off ship.

The main theme is to blast fast; if you take too long the ship will destruct and you'll be in more pieces than a jigsaw of the queen mum. The aliens themselves come in all shapes and sizes. On the first level you're attacked by giant kidneys, while Level Two has rejects from the Alien movies, and the meanies on Level Three look like mutant muppets from Sesame Street. If you're in the mood for a real good weirdo barbeque, try grabbing some of the extra weaponry which adorns the walls of the space craft. Your normal gun can be boosted to a mega-blasting laser or you can always grill the kidneys with a fireball or two. By far the best weapon is the flame thrower, which is not so much a thrower but more of a solid rod of fire which juts out from your character. You can use this to 'whip' your alien antagonists.

Should our intrepid hero get hopelessly lost he can always refer to a deck plan which just so happens to be built in to the walls. A small map appears in the corner of the screen, showing the locations of your buddies as well as traversible routes.

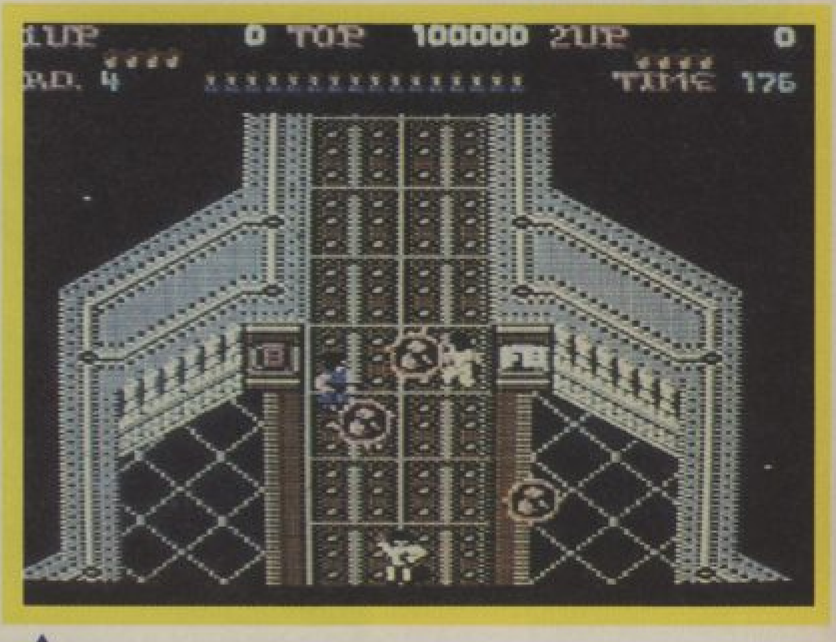
When all the men have been rescued you get to face, surprise surprise, a large, evil guardian. Most of the guardians are suprisingly well done, my favourite being the green heap whose head leaps at you after the body is destroyed.

When the guardian is out of the way it's time to move on to the next space craft and rescue more unfortunates. On the later ships you tend to find your little man having to negotiate difficult catwalks spanning a parallax scrolling pit. One slip and you plummet to your death.

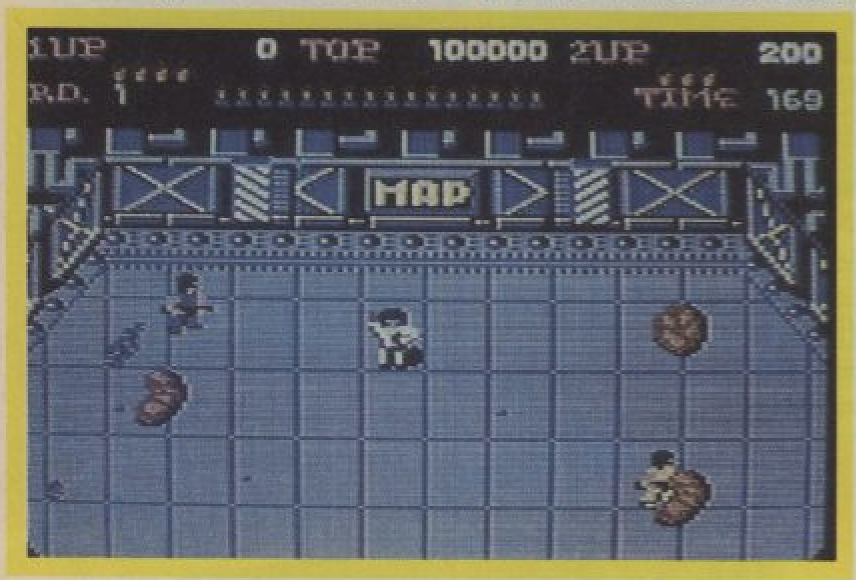
Alien Syndrome is a competent conversion, and it's gratifying to see that it has come over so well on the 64. The graphics are nicely detailed and coloured, although some levels have been over done and the sprites are difficult to see.

This is a worthwhile jaunt of pure violence that will definitely keep fans of the coin-op going for a long time to come.

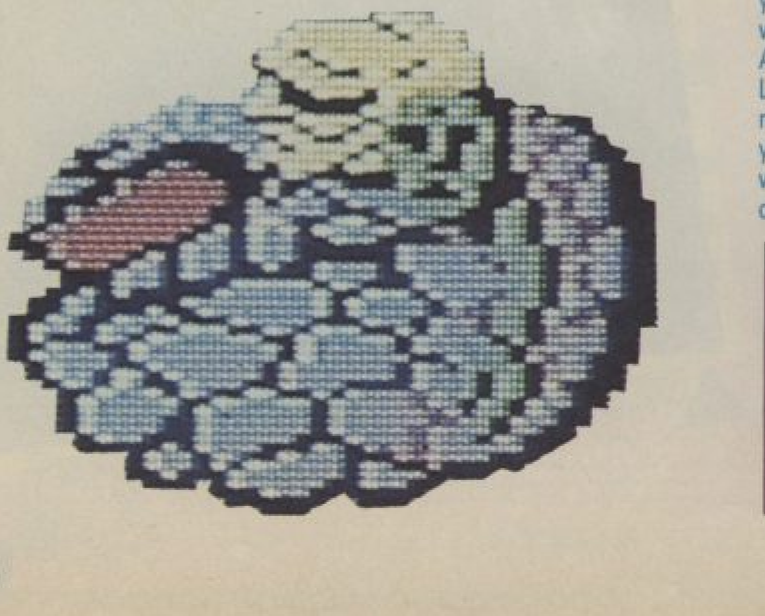
Mark Patterson



More alien frolics on the fourth ship.



Getting to grips with the kidneys on Level One.

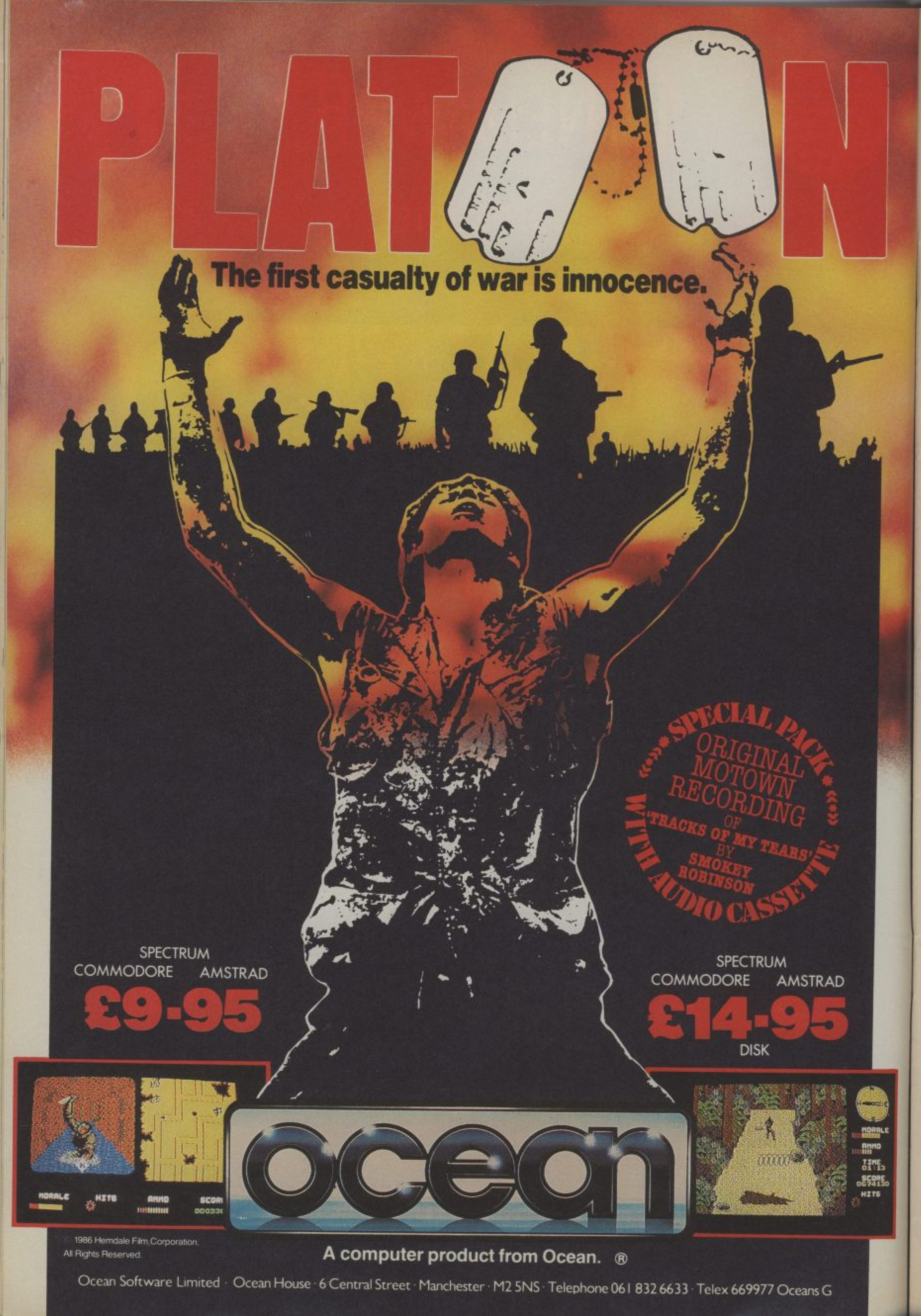


ALIEN SYNDROME — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

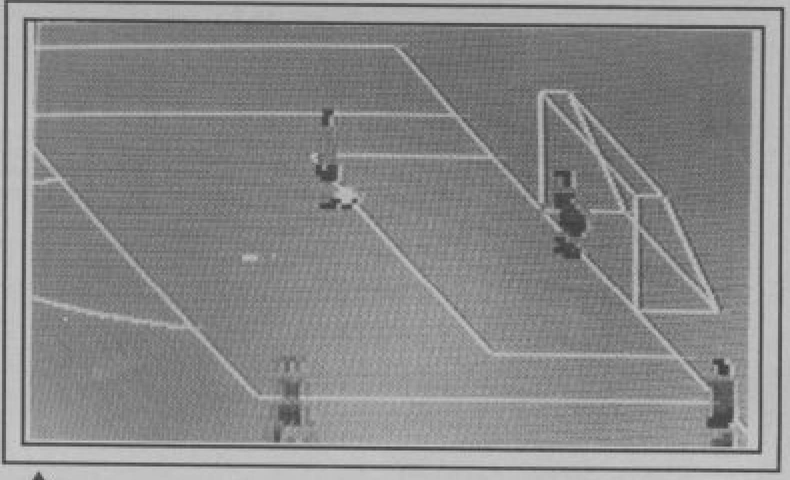
VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING
8


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64/128
CRL
Price:
£9.95/cass)
£14.95/disk

Around 1982 Commodore released what was probably the first quality sports simulation on the 64, *International Soccer*. Until now this game was only available on cartridge, but CRL have breathed new life into this classic by releasing it on the common formats of tape and disk.



A tense moment: the light grey player is about to score.

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER

International Soccer is one of the best football simulations around though. Compared to some of the more recent additions to the soccer sim band wagon, *IS* does lack some features such as slide tackles and diving headers. *IS* also shows its age as it is purely arcade, with only a simple title screen. Other soccer games nowadays have a form of interaction with building the team.

The control method is much the same as most team sport games, the player nearest the ball is moved by you while the rest of the team are computer controlled. When a player comes under your control his shirt changes colour so that he can be distinguished from the rest of the team. Under your guidance the player can tackle, pass, cross, head or shoot. The header is more of an accident than a set move, if the ball lands on your head you can happily wing your way down nearly half of the pitch with ball bouncing merrily on your head, safe from the opposition.

When you hit the fire button your player chips the ball in the direction he is facing and hopefully the computer will steer one of your team mates towards it. More often than not though, your players seem to turn their backs on the pass and run. If the pass is received that player will now come under your control and dribble the ball at his feet. When you dribble you move much more slowly than normal, and this leads to the opposition catching up.

When a member of the opposing team gets too close to the goal for comfort (ie: the penalty area) you get control of your goalie. The computer automatically moves him into position for you, then all you have to do is push fire and the direction you want to dive in, and (hopefully) a save will be made.

If the ball should stray off the pitch, a throw-in, corner or goal kick is awarded. On a throw-in you can move your player around as normal, while the computer prepares to throw from the line. When you press fire the computer player releases the ball in your direction. A corner works in a similar way, though a goal kick involves the ball being blasted down field at no particular person.

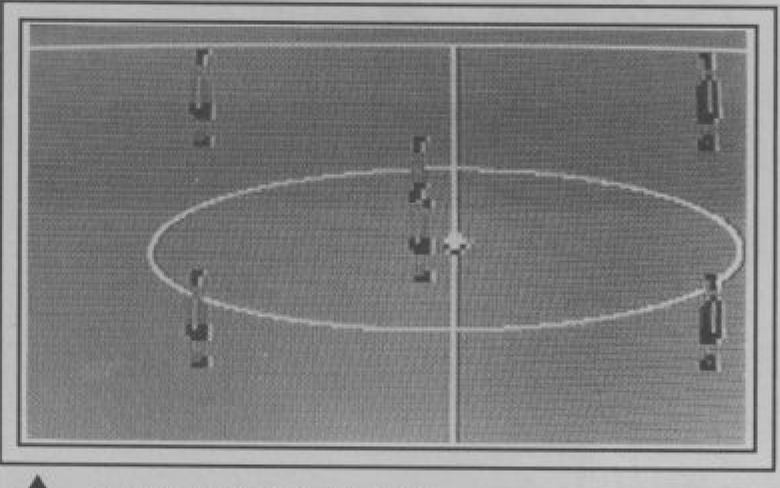
The computer team has nine skill levels ranging from piece of cake (level 1) to first division (level 9). Or you can have a two player game. You can adjust the colour of both of the teams' strips to suit your own preferences.

Each half lasts for about three minutes, with a quarter minute break in between. At the end of the match the winning team line up on the field while a woman comes on and hands the winning captain a trophy.

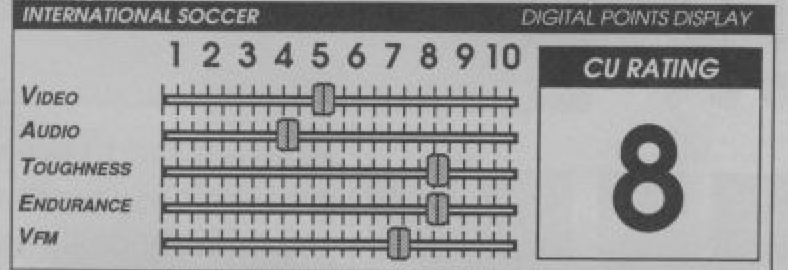
The graphics are incredibly blocky and dull, as well as poorly animated. The sound consists of bouncing noises for the ball, the ref's whistle and crowd sounds.

International Soccer is almost exactly the same now as it was all those years ago, the only exception being the ad-boards now read 'CRL 88', yet it has lasted very well, and is still just as much fun. I don't like the price tag, as in some computer shops you can still buy the original cartridge for a fiver. Still, a game for soccer enthusiasts.

Mark Patterson



'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go . . .





FOOTIE COMPETITION

Over 'ere son, on me 'ead, Bosh! Pick that one out of the old onion bag Pal! Yup we're so pleased to get our hands on this old fave that we're going to give you the chance of getting it for nowt. Those midfield dynamos at CRL have put us through with twenty-five copies of the game and a complete strip of the team of your choice. WE CAN'T MISS!

All we want you to do to stand a chance of winning is to tell us which teams (all rounds) Liverpool and Wimbledon beat on their way to the finals. Put the answers on a postcard and tell us, by way of a tiebreaker for the complete kit, which player was the most outstanding player this season and why.

Answers to Footie Compo, Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by 18th May.

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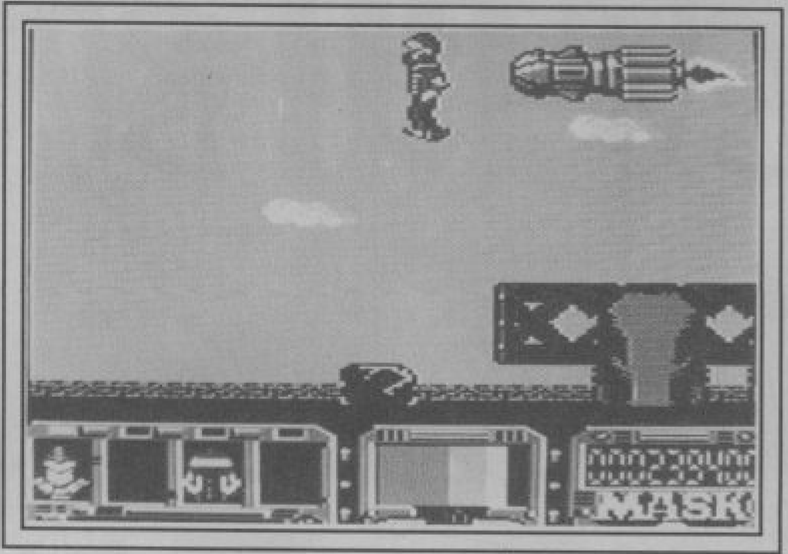
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64/128
Gremlin
Price:
£9.99/cass
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▲ *Behind you, Matt!*

VENOM Strikes Back

Someone out there had better tell Gremlin you can have too much of a good thing. Acquire a licence, maybe make a sequel, but a sequel to the sequel? This time though, Gremlin have finally cracked it — *MASK III: Venom Strikes Back* falls just short of being a very nifty piece of software.

This time the dastardly Miles Mayhem has kidnapped Matt Trakker's son Scott. And unless all of *MASK*'s equipment is turned over to them, Scott will be executed (or at least never seen again). So what does Matt do? Surrender *MASK* and let *VENOM*'s forces take over the Peaceful Nation's Alliance? Or let Scott die? No, big brave Matty boy sets out in a solo do or die mission to rescue his son. One man against the entire forces of *VENOM*. A mission which will take him to many different places, such as deserts, forest and space.

No sweat, piece of cake. Swat the bad guys, rescue the kid and be back home in time for dinner. But wait. Do I detect more than a hint of difficulty in this game? Too right matey. Not only is Matt subjected to a constant barrage of anti-anything missiles, he also has lots of precision jumping to do. Gigantic spiked mines are placed in inconvenient places.

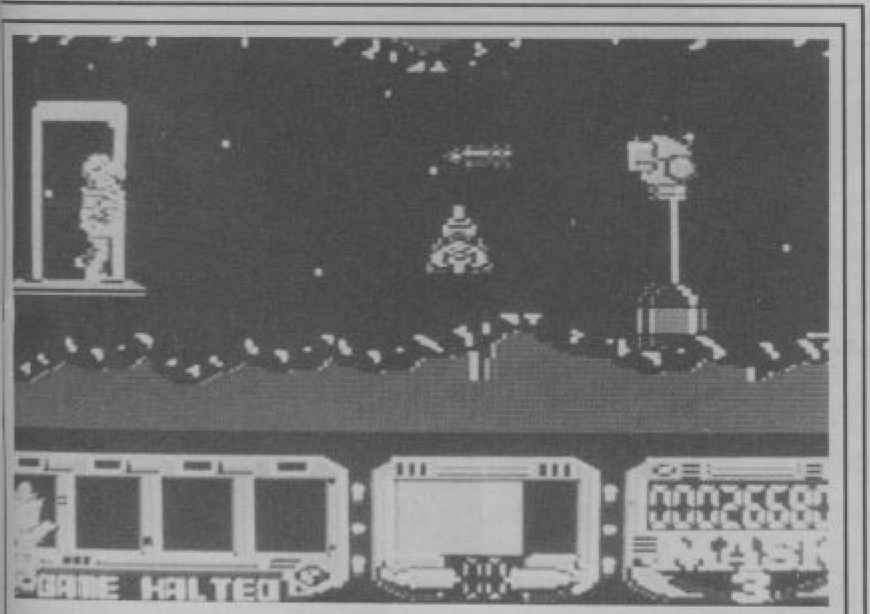
Matt has to negotiate along a scrolling landscape vaporising anything he comes across (apart from extra suits). At the end of each sub-level is a doorway leading inside a rather arty building where Matt gets shot at even more. If Matt is still in one piece by the time he reaches the end of the level there comes the traditional face-off with the guardian. If the guardian so much as touches Matt he's a gonner for sure.

Matt is controlled via keyboard or joystick and is restricted to left, right, jump, crouch and fire with the keyboard being used to select the different types of suit Matt can wear (*Armani, Woodhave or Hamnet? — Ed*). These are picked up *en route* and tend to bounce up and down in the thick of a battle doing a ruddy good impersonation of a *VENOM* attack craft. So don't go blasting them mindlessly. Some of the suits give you mega-blasty firepower and a nice name like *Backlash*. Others can heal you, or in the case of *Jackrabbit* give you a jumping ability nothing short of Superman.

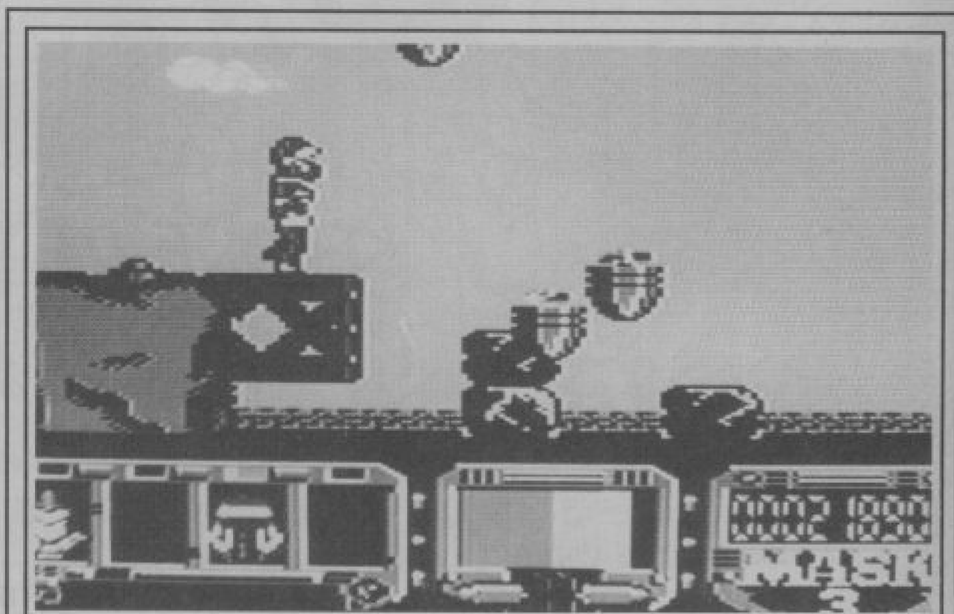
In total contrast to the previous *MASK* releases *MASK III* boasts some really good graphics. Large, colourful and well animated. Sound is utilitarian but effective. The game plays surprisingly well considering only the backdrops rarely change.

Fancy cutting a swathe of Mayhem through miles of *VENOM*'s territory? Well *MASK* could get away with being called almost any title under the sun because of its lack of ties with the comic, but at least it's a good game.

Mark Patterson



▲ *Third time lucky with* Venom Strikes Back.



▲ *Dressed to kill — and guess who's dying?*

VENOM STRIKES BACK — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
VFM

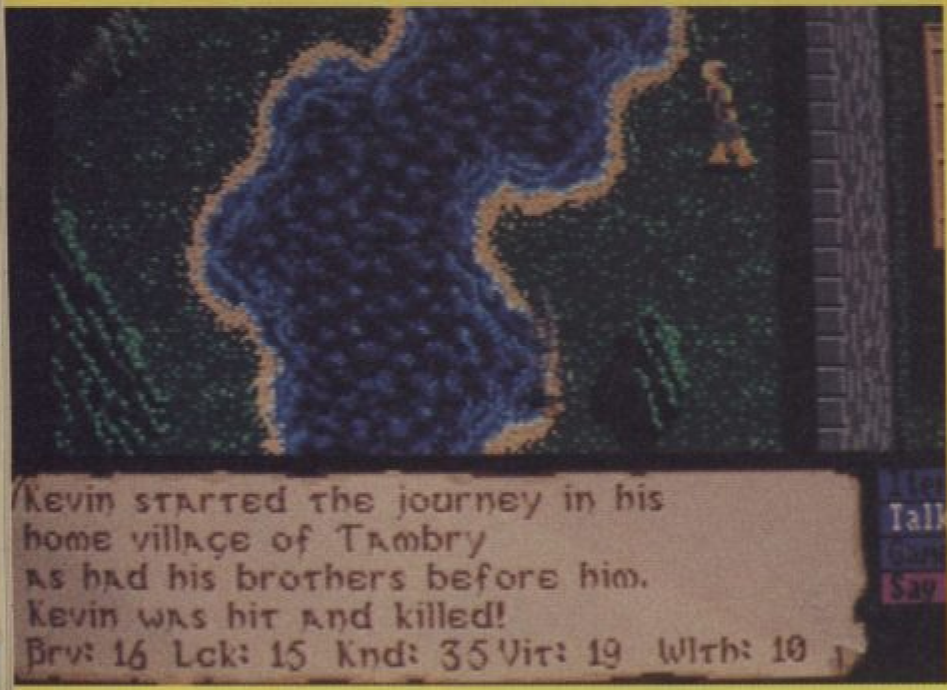
CU RATING
7

AMIGA EXTRA



REVIEWED: ECO • PINK PANTHER
THE SENTINEL • THREE STOOGES

AMAZING MERCENARY TIPS



THE FAERY TALE ADVENTURE

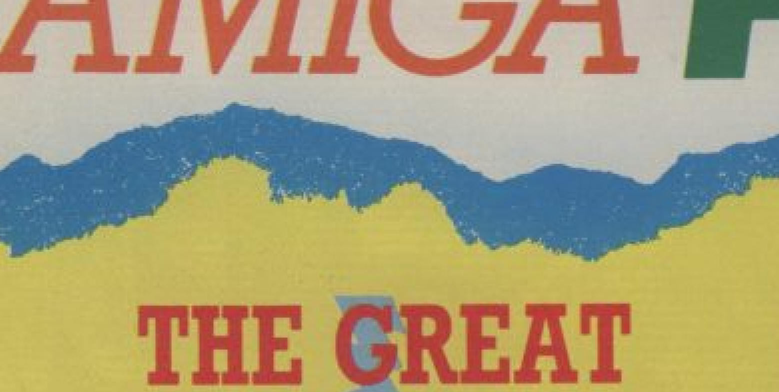
Holm, sweet Holm . . . that's the scene of what is by all accounts one of the smashest hits on the Amiga in America. Yup, it seems our adventurous friends across the ocean could not get enough of the three brothers (brave Julian, lucky Philip and gentle Kevin) and their quest which takes them through a massive (well over 17,000 screens) land comprising caverns, mazes, forests, deserts, castles, mountains, villages, lakes and even (hippies!) the astral world. To date, this totally awesome product has only been available over here on import and costing about ten squillion pounds, but with Activision's recently-made deal with programmers Microillusions, *The Faery Tale Adventure* will now be generally available at a price which won't drive you all into crime and depravity.

AMIGA FUTURE S

THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

"After falling into a dark, deep sleep, little Giana finds herself in a mysterious dreamworld where everything is strange and different". Well, that's what the packaging says, but they can't fool us: *The Great Giana Sisters* is similar to a certain other game which we shan't mention, and it is very nice too. Two-players, 30 levels, bricks to head-butt, squat little monsters to squash, diamonds to collect and chasms to be jumped is the story here for those who've somehow managed to miss out on the original of the species. And for those of you who are already into this sort of thing, there's the thrill of seeing and hearing this epic slice of platformia gleaming with lotsa bright Amiga graphics and shimmering with some yummy five-voiced tinklings.





WIZBALL

There ain't much doubt about it: Sensible Software's *Wizball*, released by Ocean, was one of the best things knocking about on the ol' 64. We thought so, anyhow, and so did scrillions of you, judging by the results of our readers poll. So it was only natural that when Ocean started looking at products to convert for Amiga, this 'un was right at the top of their list. Programmed by Peter Johnson, *Wizball* will soon be available for 16-bit owners. With eight landscapes to be coloured in by your crying walking sleeping talking living ball, you have to blast aliens and pick up the icons they leave behind to gain more control over your giddy moving ball. You have to steer clear of nasties and collect droplets of colour to fill up the paint tins to colour in the landscapes. You have to drop through pipes to get around. And, with graphics this good, you have to get your hands on a copy as soon as possible.



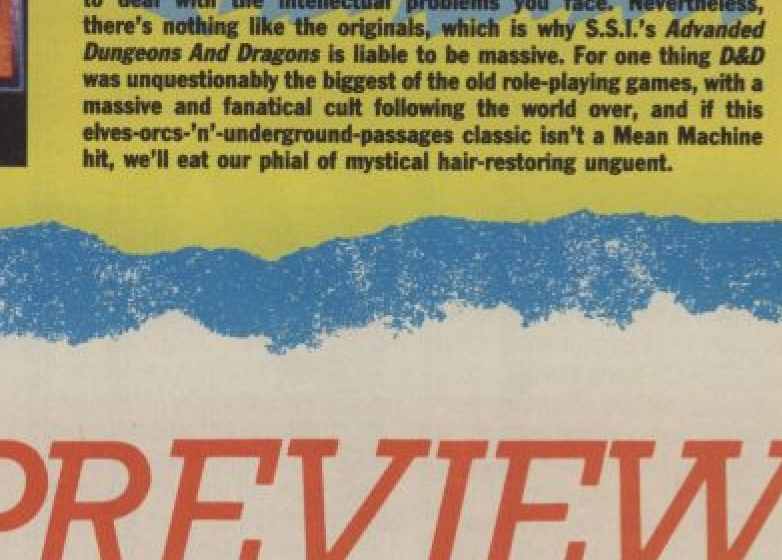
ADVANCED DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

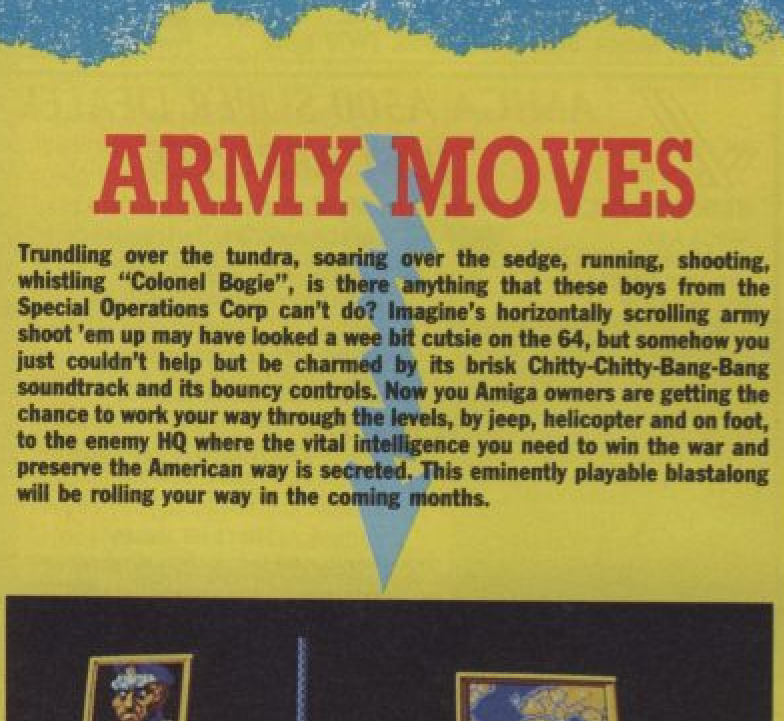
Oh, you young folk are spoilt summat rotten, you are. We remember the days when role-playing was something you and your mates did sitting around on your living room floor with a sheet of graph paper in the middle and a Dungeon Master controlling the progress of the game with the help of a handbook. Nowadays, of course, you've got computers to do all the grimy work for you, freeing your grey matter to deal with the intellectual problems you face. Nevertheless, there's nothing like the originals, which is why S.S.I.'s *Advanded Dungeons And Dragons* is liable to be massive. For one thing *D&D* was unquestionably the biggest of the old role-playing games, with a massive and fanatical cult following the world over, and if this elves-orcs-'n'-underground-passages classic isn't a Mean Machine hit, we'll eat our phial of mystical hair-restoring unguent.

SHOCK PREVIEW

ARMY MOVES

Trundling over the tundra, soaring over the sedge, running, shooting, whistling "Colonel Bogie", is there anything that these boys from the Special Operations Corp can't do? Imagine's horizontally scrolling army shoot 'em up may have looked a wee bit cutsie on the 64, but somehow you just couldn't help but be charmed by its brisk Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang soundtrack and its bouncy controls. Now you Amiga owners are getting the chance to work your way through the levels, by jeep, helicopter and on foot, to the enemy HQ where the vital intelligence you need to win the war and preserve the American way is secreted. This eminently playable blastalong will be rolling your way in the coming months.





STORMTROOPER

These Creation people may be mere infants in the wacky world of Amiga programming, but their first offering *Stormtrooper* looks like a very grown-up game indeed. Through a splendidly desolate post-holocaust landscape — in fact a mining complex — your hero runs, blasting through sixteen levels of invading mercenaries. Just for a change, you're not doing this for love of country — you're a mercenary too, buddy, and you get paid per corpse. Your ultimate task? To "terminate" the complex's head geophysicist who's just turned traitor and defected to a foreign power. As the Scouse *Breakway* thief so aptly puts it, "it's *wicked*".

Clik

AMIGA SOFTWARE SPECIALIST

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One of the Sentinel's cohorts: a sentry.

THE SENTINEL

Firebird
Price: £19.95

In the two years since the Amiga became something of a household name, there has been very little original software produced for it. A few software houses, like Psygnosis and Cinemaware, deliver the goods, granted. But on the whole the Amiga's software base seems to consist generally of conversions from 8-bit games, which are then tarted up a bit.

Geoff Crammond's *The Sentinel* falls into the latter category. However, it's also undoubtedly one of the most original concepts ever to appear on any computer. The 64 version was praised to the skies when it was released over a year ago, and I'm about to do the same to this lastest incarnation. *The Sentinel* on the Amiga isn't vastly different, but there are a number of nifty enhancements. But just in case you missed out on all the fun the first time around, here's how it works . . .

There are 10,000 levels to play, with the objective of completing them all. Each level comprises a chequered landscape (a bit like a contoured chess board really) with trees dotted around. You control a being called the Synthoid and start at the lowest point on the landscape, with the aim of overthrowing the Sentinel who occupies the highest point. You move around by creating a new robot shell and transferring to it. However you can only create a robot if you can see the square on which it is to sit. Meanwhile, having sensed your presence, the Sentinel turns around on her plinth, scanning the landscape. Should her beady sensors fall on your frail form, she will drain you of energy until you die. Obviously a good strategy is the order of the day.

Extra height is gained by creating a boulder on which to place your new robot shell. Again, you have to be able to see the square in question. The Sentinel is basically centred around energy. You can't create anything and thus move without it, and the Sentinel doesn't like you stealing it from her landscapes. So you have to ensure that once you've transferred you absorb the old shell to keep up your energy level. It's worth sucking up any trees while you're at it. The trees are the basic unit of energy. A boulder is equivalent to two trees, and a robot is worth three.

So what of the improvement? Well for a start, this version is considerably faster than any other and I don't just mean the speed of the graphics; the whole pace is extremely fast and is guaranteed to induce sheer panic into even the hardiest player. It's also more colourful than the 64 version, and there's an odd David Whittaker soundtrack playing throughout. I'm not so sure it enhances the edge-of-the-seat atmosphere, but at least you can turn it off and just have the sound effects.

But these enhancements are purely cosmetic. The most innovative improvement is the fact that you can play with the mouse in conjunction with a few keys, rather than just using the keyboard.

Not so neat though is the HELP function. Pressing the HELP key when the cursor is pointing into the sky results in a map of your surroundings being displayed. This seems detrimental to me, as what makes the Sentinel so absorbing to play is the nail-biting, nerve-wracking tension of not knowing where anything is. Mind you, you don't have to press HELP, but it does seem a shame that the option exists.

The Sentinel is simply a classic concept, and this version is the best yet. I can't praise it highly enough, (heaven knows rating something like this is hard enough), so I'll just say: BUY IT!

Gary Penn

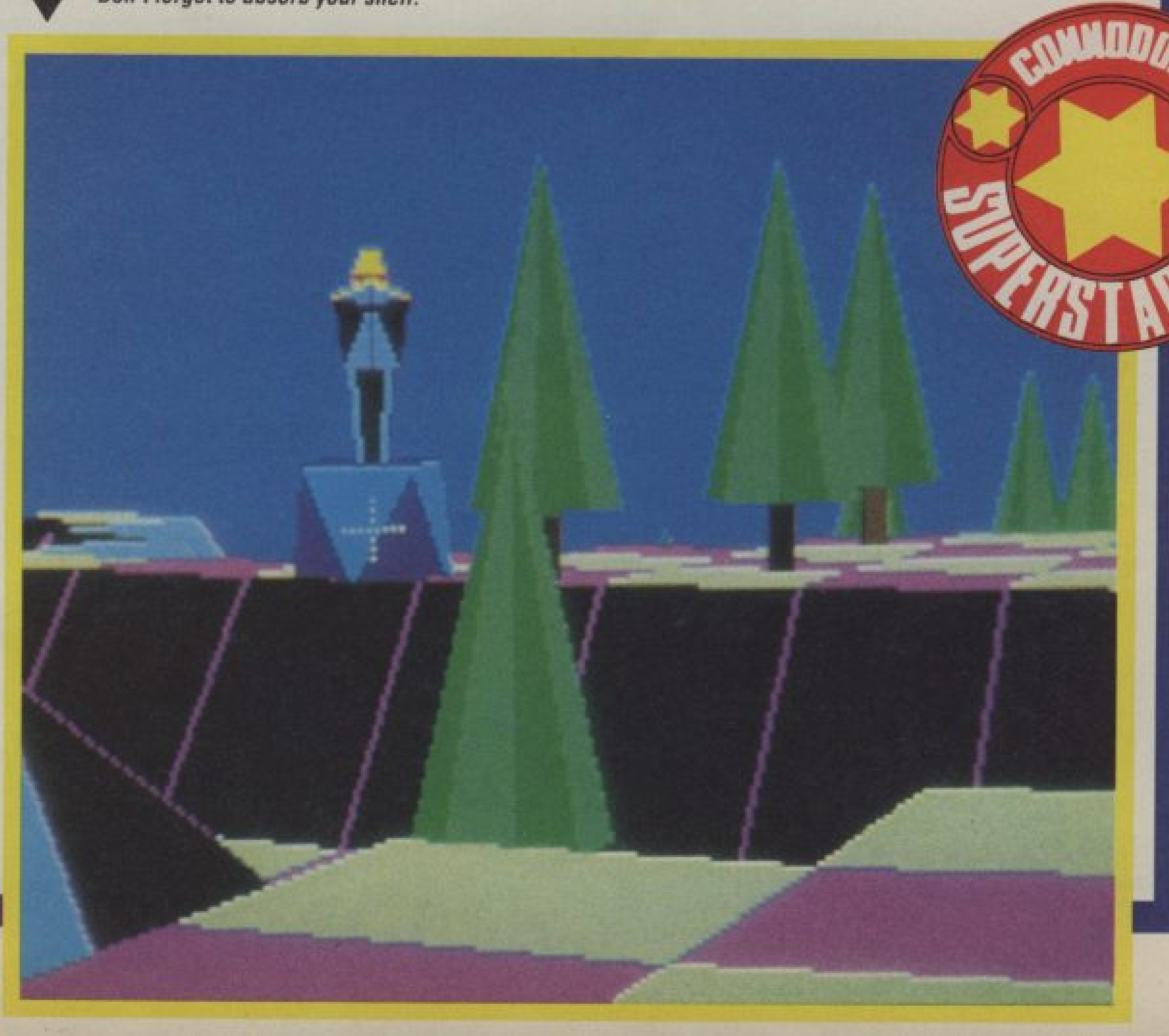
SENTINEL — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10)

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
Vfm

CU RATING

9

Don't forget to absorb your shell.





The end of Level One . . .

Amiga Rainbow Arts Price: £19.95

JINKS

Eeeeuuurrggghhh! A bat, a ball. Bounce the ball and what d'ya get? *BreakOut*! Yes, *Jinks* is another clone. However, here the *BreakOut* idea has evolved to where it is barely recognisable. The plot is original, though it doesn't work very well with the game. Let me explain.



Pick a level, any level.



Level Three: Candy stripes and craters.

For a long time it has been thought that the planet Atavi was technically underdeveloped. Your mission is to go down onto the planet and collect samples of their technical data (or bounce a ball off some bricks).

The bat is now called a glider and can shift up as well as left to right. You can use the flat side of the bat to keep the ball bouncing in the same direction, or, by pressing fire your bat performs a flip and the ball bounces off at an angle.

Instead of being played on a static screen the playing area covers roughly six scrolling screens, which means it's easy to lose track of the ball.

The ball is also influenced by gravity, and sometimes another object veers the ball from its path.

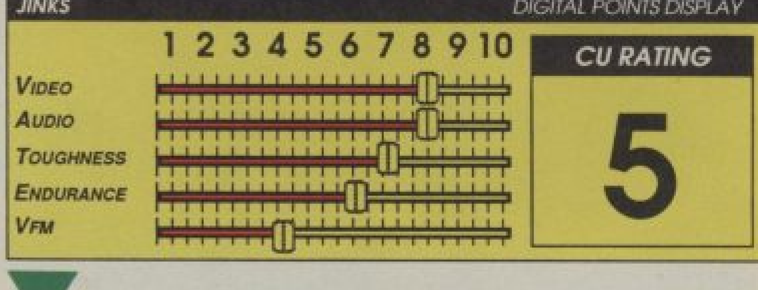
Apart from the bricks there are other bonus objects to hit such as tiny versions of Earth and teddy bears. To hinder you the programmers have left huge mouths and an assortment of odd aliens.

If you get bored with your current level a well timed wallop should send the ball flying into the exit. Then you get the bonus screen where you can choose on which of the four levels to continue your game. There is one snag; the numbers corresponding to the levels are dotted around the screen, and you have to bounce your ball into one of them.

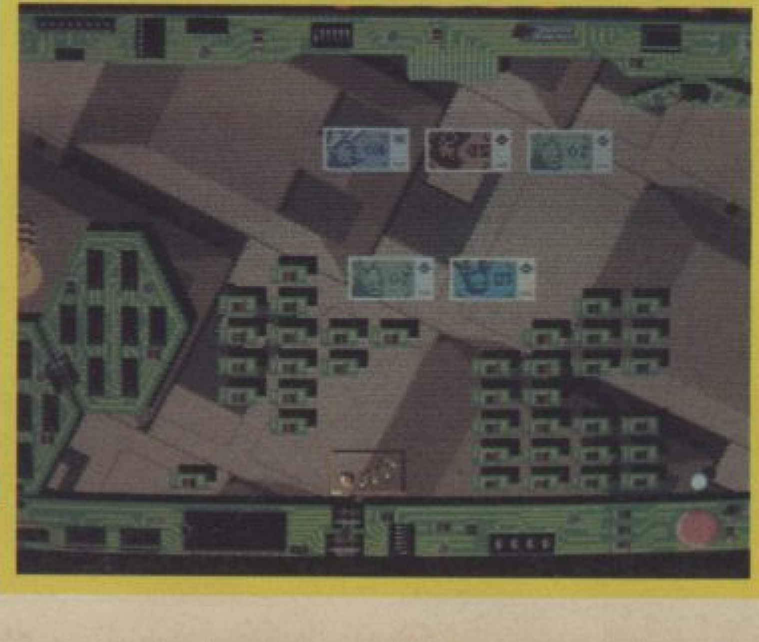
As time draws on the game gets tougher. More traps appear and the nasties get nastier. But the game has only four levels. And four levels for 20 quid is bad news. On the other hand the graphics are really good in places.

The sound is also colourful with loads of twangy noises and samples. But the game is let down by the lack of levels and by the fact that all the levels are basically the same (graphics apart). Expensive for what is on offer, although an improved version with more levels would not go amiss.

Mark Patterson



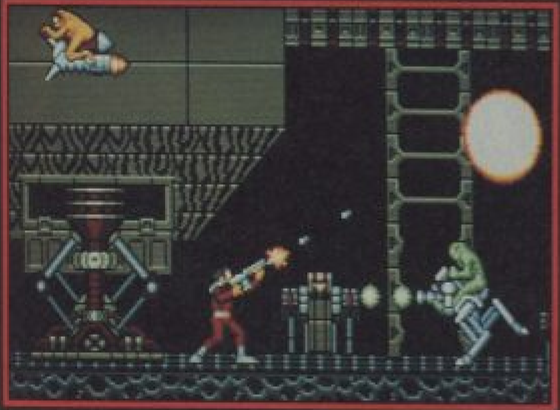
Gorgeous graphics, not enough variety.

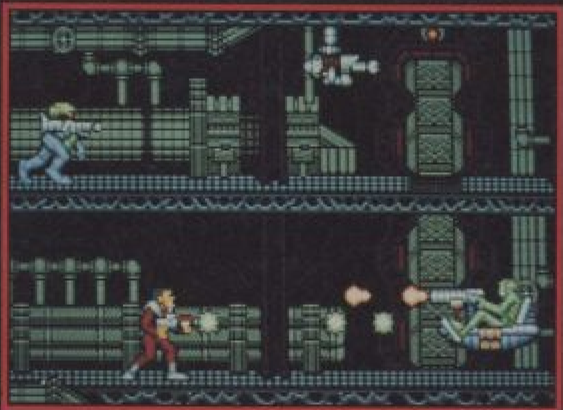


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OBLITERATOR









OBLITERATOR

You are Drak the Last of the Obliterators, a genetically enhanced and awesome fighting machine, bio-engineered for the execution of incredible tasks, the ultimate solution to the most cataclysmic of predicaments.

In the voids of Federation space an alien cruiser has materialised. It is a ship of sinister and foreboding power. Federation defences have been smashed. Earth lies exposed, there is only one hope and you are it!

Summoned by the Federation council, your assignment is to use a prototype matter transporter to infiltrate the alien cruiser. Armed with a particle beam disrupter, lasers and whatever the alien habitat can provide, you must cripple the alien vessel thus enabling its destruction.

OBLITERATOR — £24.95

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SLAYGON

Amiga
Microdeal
Price: £19.95

Any experienced games-player will immediately feel at home with *Slaygon*, as both the gameplay and the ideas have been used on more than one occasion previously. As with all Microdeal games I have played, *Slaygon* comes with an okay manual (though they must have made enough money by now to afford something a little more glossy), and yet another mini-novella.

In this case, the story runs that you have developed an all-powerful robot, and that it must reinstate law and order in the world in which you live. The screen is covered in little boxes, with a smallish window showing a three dimensional view of where you are within the maze you must wander around. This maze is in fact the area surrounding the main computer, which you must destroy.

The unfortunate thing about *Slaygon* is that it has all been done before. The actual game concept is very old, and while playing the game, there is little to illustrate the fact that you are using a 68000, quality graphics, stereo sound computer which is as yet unsurpassed in terms of price/performance.

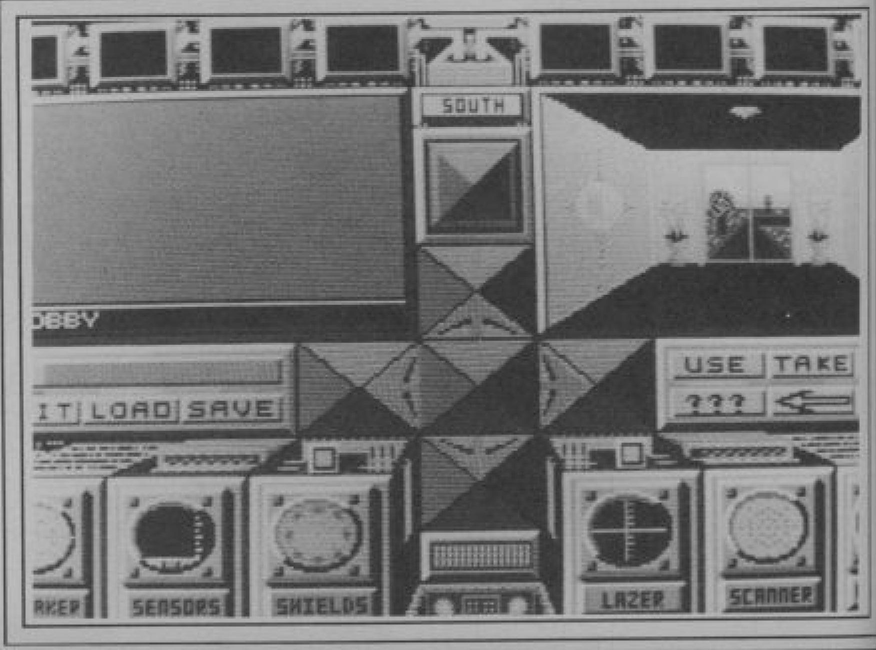
When playing the game, you must wander about the maze (wonderful for any map makers amongst you, but very dull for people who want to actually explore and not simply spend hour upon hour drawing maps), looking for objects, collecting them, and eventually destroying the main computer. Within the maze there are a variety of doors, some locked and some not, which in turn contain a variety of useful and useless objects; ranging from lasers to little orangey-red balls which I can't get to do anything!

One point in favour of this game that I should mention is that it allows the user to make the most of the machine's multi-tasking, with the game sitting waiting for you to return while you go off to do a bit of real blasting.

The graphics are okay, but

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A-maze-ing gameplay? 'Fraid not . . .



FLINTSTONES

Amiga
Grand Slam
Price: £19.99

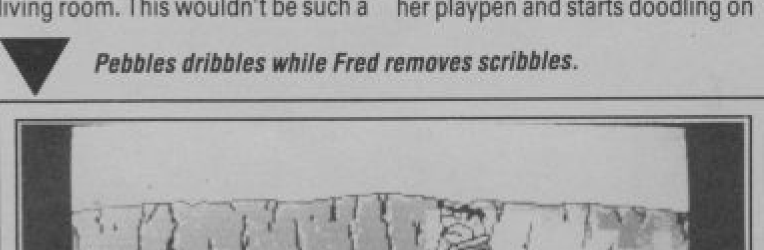
Fans of Hanna Barbara's prehistoric cartoon series have had a bit of a treat recently. They've been able to buy Fred 'n' Barney boxer shorts and do a promotional bop to the Screaming Blue Messiahs' 'I wanna be a Flintstone'. They should think carefully though before they invest in this licence.

Seasoned gamers will remember the version released a couple of years back on the 64. That had nice graphics which caught the feel of the programme, but tedious pick-up-and-drop gameplay. The Amiga version isn't the same game at all, but it suffers from similar problems.

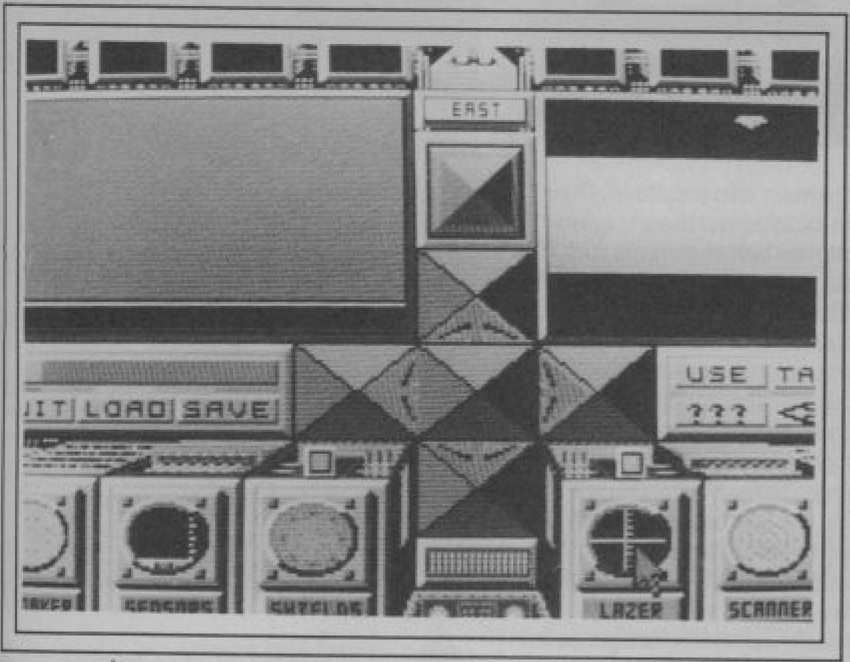
It divides into two sections and has a simple plot which takes you from one to the other. In the first sub-game Fred wants to go bowling with his old pal Barney Rubble. The problem is that Wilma (the missus) won't let him until he's painted the living room. This wouldn't be such a hassle if Fred didn't have to mind Pebbles (the bubby) at the same time. And what a naughty wee thing she is too. Every time Fred gets stuck into the job Pebbles nips out of her playpen and starts doodling on the walls. Fred has to stop painting, put down the brush (a fluffy-tailed critter) and put her back before he can paint over her handiwork. This happens frequently, and there's a time limit. Perhaps if he gave her a good clout she might pack it in, but you can't do that.

If you complete Part One you get to go bowling with Barney. Away the lads! A few bevvies and into the bowling shoes. And pon my soul if Part Two isn't a bowling sim-ette. A couple of stabs on the fire button adjust an on-screen meter for curve

Pebbles dribbles while Fred removes scribbles.



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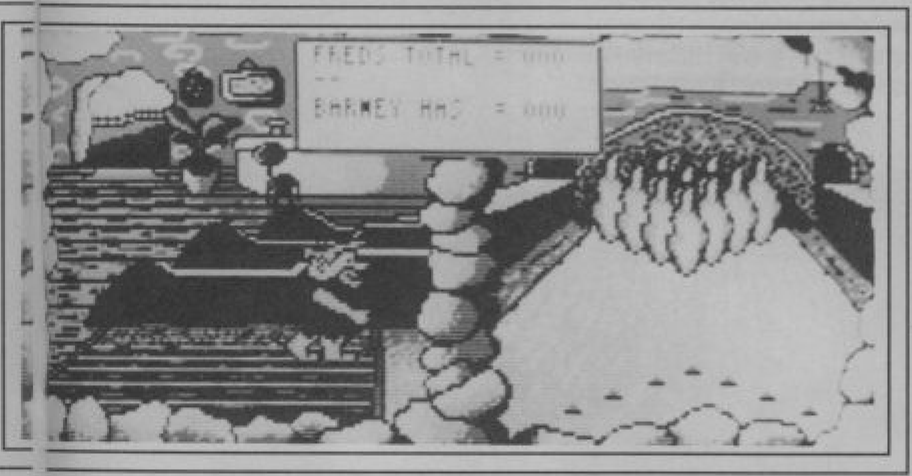


Microdeal mediocrity . . .

compare it to *Ferrari Formula One*, or even some of the latest budget releases and they are definitely not up to scratch. Nor is the sound anything worth writing home (or wasting space here) about. What really lets the game down, however, (if the above is not enough) is the gameplay. Difficult to get into, unimpressive to play, and exceptionally easy to get bored with.

Ian J. Frogsac

SLAYGON — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	7
AUDIO	5
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE	3
VFM	5
CU RATING	**5**



and speed and Fred tip-toes down the alley and slings his ball down. And that's all there is to it.

Grand Slam's *Flintstones* isn't a bad game by any means. The graphics are pretty well spot on and it captures the flavour of the show well enough. What's missing is any real depth. Part One's arcade adventurish poser is just too short, whilst the bowling sim that is Part Two is totally incongruous. Someone must have run out of ideas.

Mike Pattenden

FLINTSTONES — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	8
AUDIO	6
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE	3
VFM	3
CU RATING	**3**

CRACK!

Amiga Entertainment Int/Linel Price: £19.95

The last thing anyone needs right now is an *Arkanoid* clone, but like it or not, you've got one. Having said that, bar Development Software's imported, near perfect version, this is the best you can get.

Programmed by Swiss software house Linel, who sound as if they should be making expensive bars of chocolate for posh stores, this is well-programmed and contains some of the nice touches that are becoming a hallmark of Amiga games.

Its loading sequence is brilliant. Little caveman figures pop out and paint the game's name on a wall. Suddenly there's a sampled Tarzan howl and another one swings on a rope across the screen only to smack into the wall. Well it's funny when you see it, anyway.

The jungle theme is carried through with more sampled effects and a native drone. The game itself is a little disappointing. Although the bricks hide well-drawn pictures of prehistoric beasties the *Arkanoid* gameplay is not as sharp as it might be. The ricochet effect isn't so good and it's simply not as challenging.

The usual features are in there like sticky bat, lasers and disruptors, whilst the alien life forms that float around the screen (in this case mice and acorns) will sap any power you have collected.

Crack! does however have two assets that might make you want to buy it. The first is a screen designer which allows you to construct your own levels and is easy to use, the second is its neat little bonus game. Each time you clear three screens a jungle scene appears in which you have to guide a figure back and forwards catching coconuts as they fall. It's not exactly rip-roaring entertainment, but it's kind of cute.

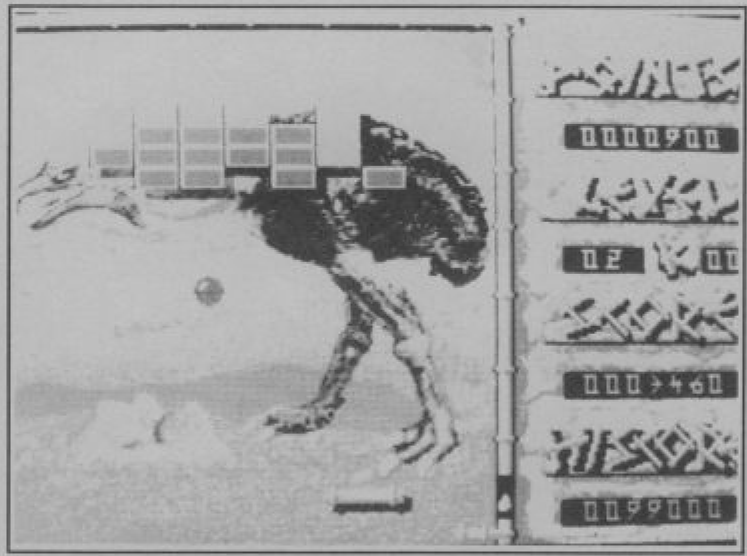
In all *Crack!* is a tasty morsel, but at its price, it's not the kind of program you're going to load between games.

Mike Pattenden

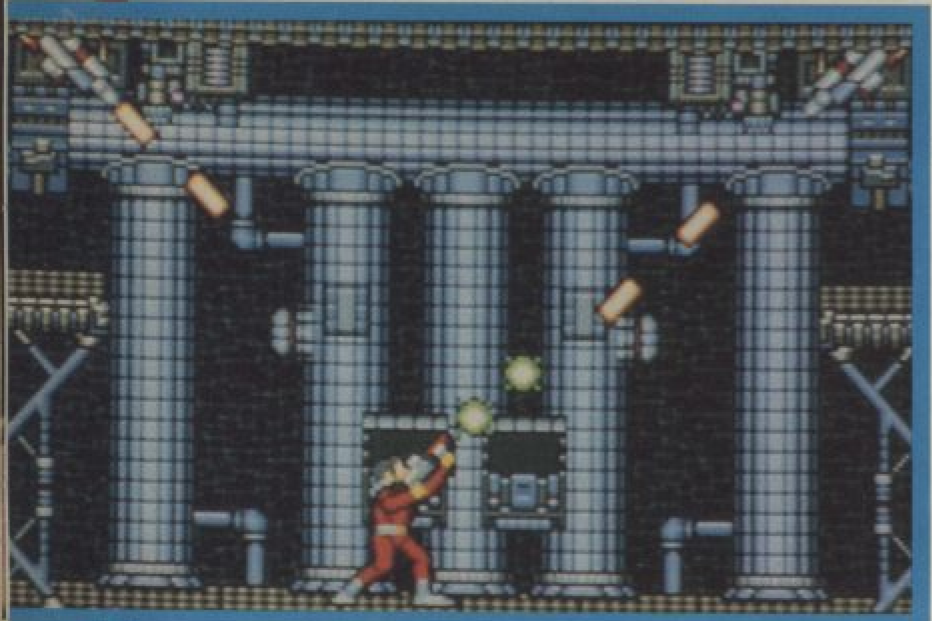
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CRACK! — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	7
AUDIO	8
TOUGHNESS	6
ENDURANCE	6
VFM	5
CU RATING	**6**

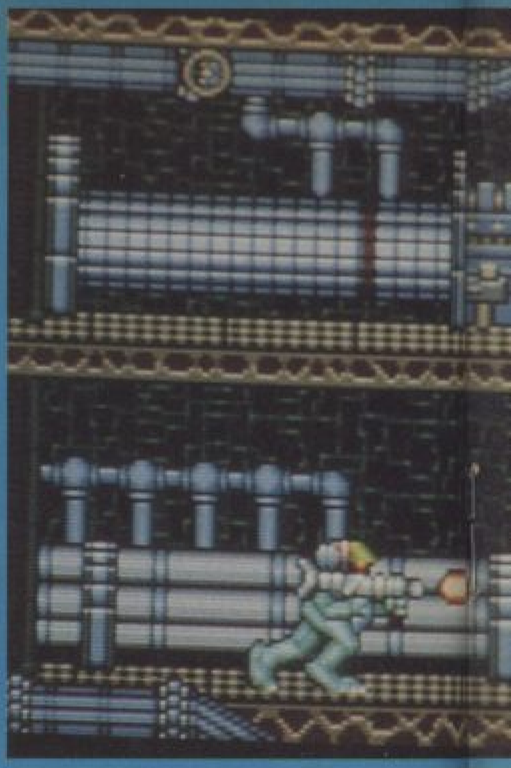
Prehistoric scenario and gameplay to match!



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A duel to the death with alien laser cannons.



Yeow! That smarts!

OBLITE

Amiga
Psygnosis
Price: £24.95

The last of the Obliterators is called upon for his toughest mission since the Clone Wars. The Obliterators, an elite fighting force trained from childhood, reflexes, strength and senses all genetically enhanced. Sent out on suicide missions during the war, Drak was the only one ever to return.

A strange, alien ship has entered Federation space. Its apparent mission, the destruction of the Federation home planet, Earth. The Federation sent a starfleet to curb this alien menaace, but in the ensuing battle nearly all the starfleet was destroyed; the alien vessel was untouched.

The Federation beam Drak aboard the alien craft in an attempt to stop its unchecked advance into Federation space. The Elders reveal to Drak that the only way to stop the ship is to perform several tasks in a set order, firstly disabling the plasma drive, then bringing down the ship's battle shields, and finally disabling the weapon systems. On top of this the Federation want Drak to recover any computer data packs containing information on the technology of the ship. But as soon as the main ship armaments have been knocked out there is only a short time before starfleet start their attack run.

While the game is loading you are presented with a great full screen animated sequence of Drak leveling off his gun and firing, with the expression on his face showing more emotion than most of the Vietnam films.

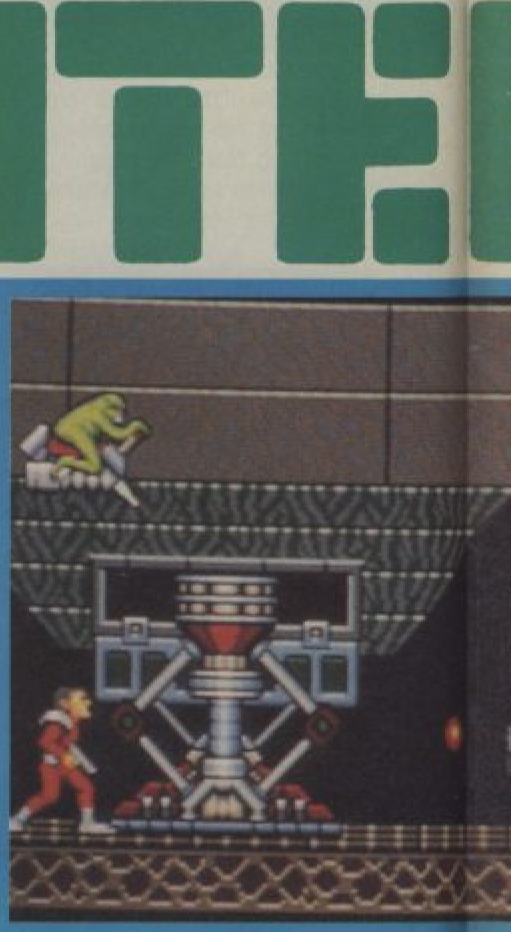
The game proper starts with Drak being teleported to a random location on the ship. Armed only with a pistol he sets out to single-handedly defeat an intelligence far superior to his own macho mind.

The ship is split into several levels, each connected by a series of lifts. There are a few doors leading to minor decks for Drak to investigate, but nothing of any consequence lies behind most, except for nasty, green, bug-eyed things which are armed and extremely dangerous. You do have a limited body shield to protect you, but if this wears out you'll either be vaporised or blown apart in the nicest way possible.

The control method for Drak is very similar to that in *Barbarian*; a joystick can be used for up/down/

Go ahead, punk . . .





Plenty of odd aliens to kill.

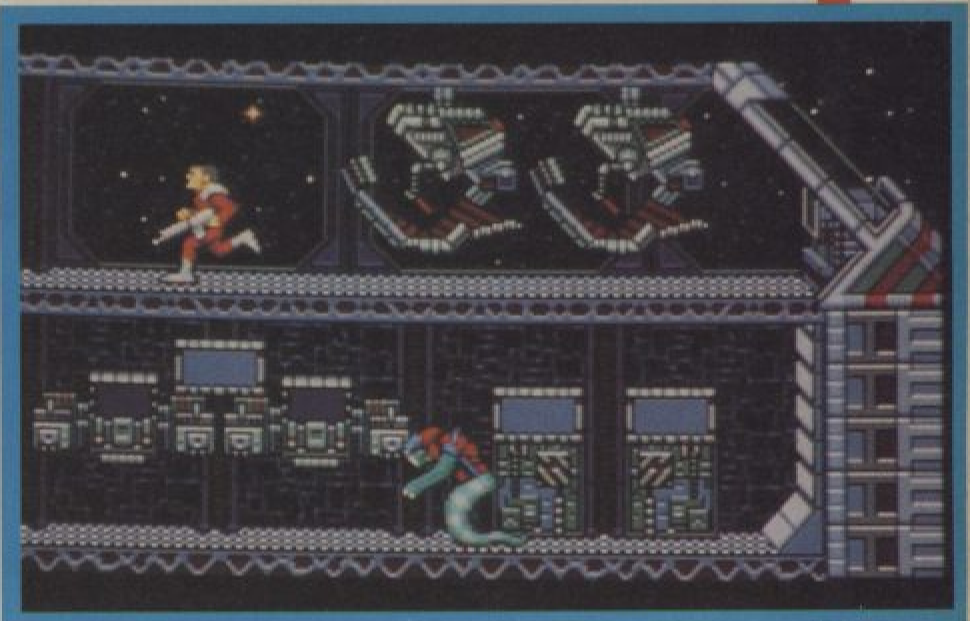




AMIGA

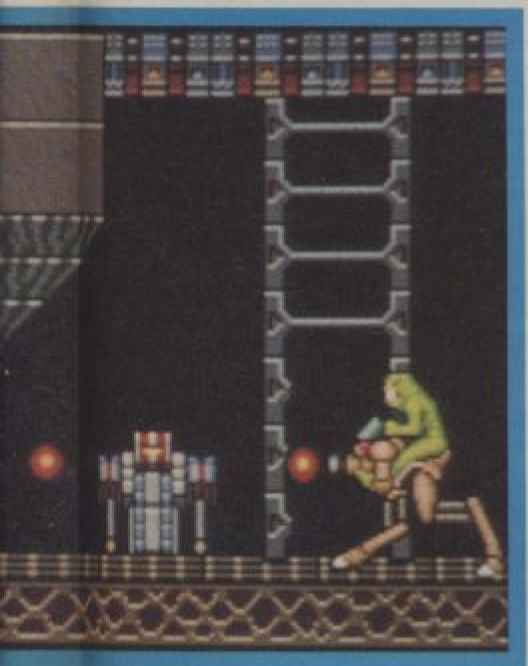
left/right and fire, though this is not recommended. The easiest way of controlling Drak is through the icons at the bottom of the screen, representing the directions of movement as well as attack, pick up, defend, jump and enter. You can enter several desired control commands at once, but this often leads to confusion and Drak running off in the wrong direction or getting zapped.

Obliterator boils down to being a case of a brush up and a new lick of paint, as anyone who has ever played *Barbarian* will notice. Extra weapons, and the aliens being reset after every visit to the location, help to give *Obliterator* the feel of its predecessor.



In space no-one can hear you obliterate!

ERATOR



Ace opening sequence.



The run of the game is very basic; explore the ship, avoid and destroy the aliens and find a piece of equipment. A game format which has remained basically unchanged for many years, and *Obliterator* is no exception, even if it is extremely pretty.

The aliens and Drak are well defined, coloured, and designed, but are let down by the lack of frames in a movement, and they tend to slow down considerably when the screen gets busy. Extra touches are added to some movements, such as when Drak has been shot, he then proceeds to do a bit of a flip and land face down on the ground, looking the total opposite to his image. The backdrops are clear and go well with the foreground characters, the only gripe being that there is not enough change of scenery. An atmospheric soundtrack plays throughout your adventure.

If you have *Barbarian* and like it you should like *Obliterator*, but you might not find it as puzzling. If you have had no past experience with *Barbarian*, you should still give *Obliterator* more than a casual look — after all, we all want to save the Earth at some time, don't we?

Mark Patterson

OBLITERATOR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	CU RATING
VIDEO	8	7
AUDIO	8	
TOUGHNESS	6	
ENDURANCE	7	
VFM	7	

Lovely Roger Dean artwork on the box.



ROLLING THUNDER

Amiga
US Gold
Price: £19.99

Dapbe bap bap (Short instrumental rendition of The Cosby Show theme). Arrrrribba, everrrrrybody samba! Baddies these guys may be, but they can sure dance. What am I talking about? Just one of the many bad points of the latest in a neverending line of coin-op conversions from US Gold.

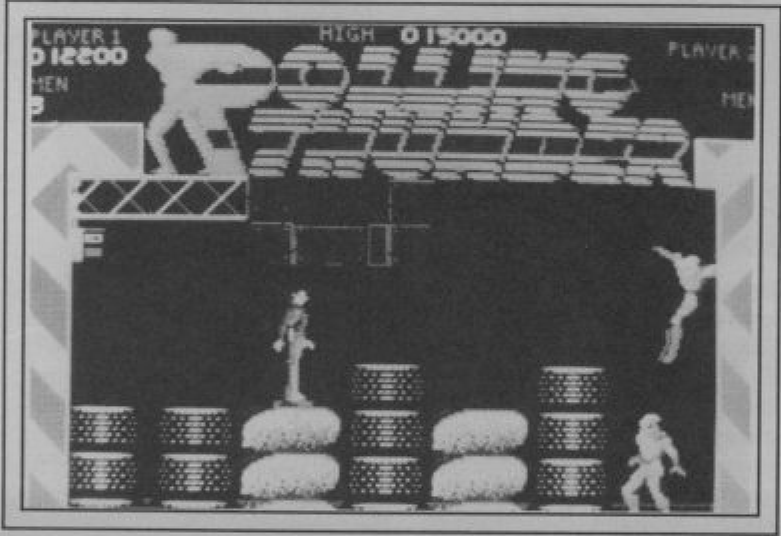
You, in the guise of Agent Albatross, must rescue the ravishing Leila from the gritty paws of the Geldra organisation. Set over a variety of left to right (and sometimes up and down) scrolling areas, you have to shoot, jump and duck your way past trillions and squillions of Geldra's henchmen, who for some reason are remarkably similar to Klu Klux Klansmen. You are armed with only two weapons. Your trusty handgun, and your even trustier machine gun.

You begin with the positively huge collection of 50 handgun bullets but no MG bullets. Naturally, these soon disperse themselves into the bodies of any passing hooded villains, so a quick search of the signposted doors that line the corridors replenishes your bullets and, if you are extra specially good this Christmas, you may be bestowed with some MG bullets. Cor!

An examination of the April issue will reveal to you that the 64 version of *RT* was none too wonderful. In fact, it was downright awful. It's a good thing the Amiga is capable of better things, you say. *RT* in 16 bits could never be terrible. Sorry to upset you, guys, but it's not so hot. As you can probably see from the screenshot on this page, it bears a striking resemblence to the arcade. That's where the similarity ends. First thing to hit you is the appalling scrolling; it's slow and very jerky. The actual graphics are none too well defined either, and a few more frames of animation wouldn't go amiss.

No, please, don't ask me about the sound. It's quite nice, granted, but I don't think a continual samba-type tune is really needed. Talking of sambas, which I rarely do, when the baddies kill you by punching you,

Marginally better than the 64 version.



AMIGA

MACH 3

Amiga
Infogrammes
Price: £19.95

Put on your Pilot's helmet, don your kinky plastic suit with the zips and board your light aircraft-cum-spaceship.

Your task is simple. Guide your craft along the wide valleys and through the portals of time and space until you meet the wizard Sfax and then destroy him. Easy, at least it would be were the playability level of the game a little higher. Nice though it is, the gameplay isn't good enough to earn very high merit. It does have a lot of good points in its favour. The graphics for one.

You view your ship from behind *à la Space Harrier* and from this strange position you have to avoid bullets, meteor showers and other craft that look like they were extras in the old Flash Gordon serials. The aliens appear from the distance and zoom towards you in true 3D fashion. Those of you who are familiar with *Space Harrier* may be tempted to just roll around the screen ducking and diving and think that will get you through the level. It won't. Mines lines the floor like £10 notes line my bedroom and these explode as soon as you go anywhere near them.

The sound has its moments. For instance, when you have lost your six lives, a sexy female voice says (in the most suggestive way it can be said) "Game over". In quite a few places though, the sound could be better.

When you are hit your ship bucks and rolls, vectorises and finally disintergrates. Very stylised and surprisingly realistic. In fact, the entire handling of the ship is done very realistically. It flips and banks smoothly and generally behaves as you would expect it to behave, although after a simulated 3G turn, it can be hard to position yourself for the small collection of bridges up ahead.

At various points throughout each level there are small tunnels made

MACH 3 — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

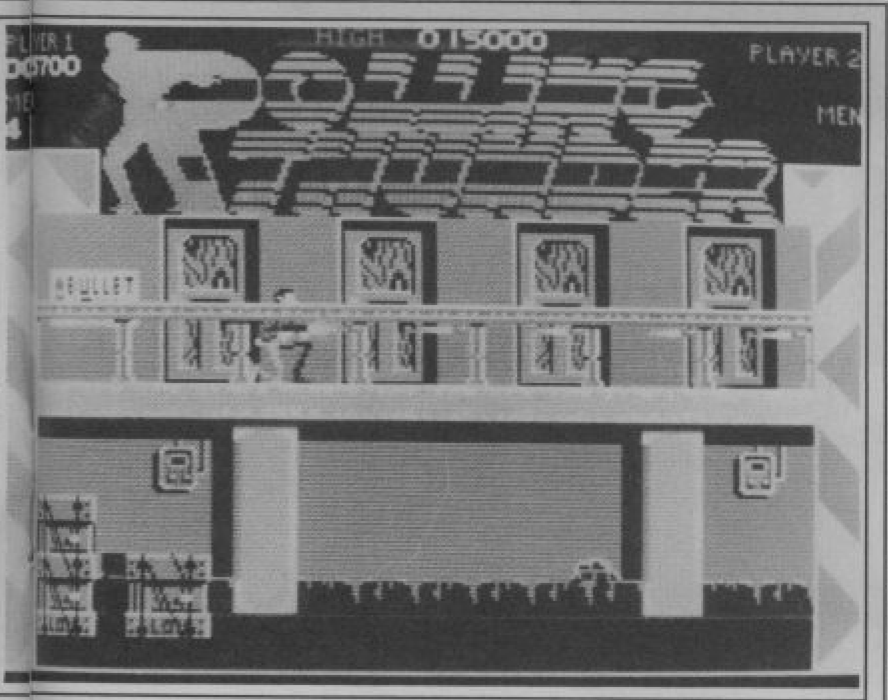
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING
6

March 3: ***Nice touches, weak gameplay.***





▲ *At least it looks like the arcade game ...*

they do a funny little dance which, delightful as it is to watch, does tend to take the edge off the game a little.

This is US Gold's first foray into the Amiga scene so maybe we shouldn't expect too much. At the price *RT* represents a poor investment.

Tony Dillon

AMIGA

ROLLING THUNDER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	6
Audio	7
Toughness	4
Endurance	5
VFM	5

CU RATING: 5

of bridges close to each other. If you successfully navigate through these, you gain bonus points. It's not easy to get under them and survive, because some smartarse has planted a considerable number of mines under each one. If you don't get through this, it's back to the start of the level for you, just like the exhaust port in *Star Wars.* Lined up just in front of the portal are two rows of very powerful mines, so the trick is to fly high over them, and then dive down and through the small black hole.

The scrolling is pathetic for an Amiga. It jerks perceptibly and really spoils the first impression.

Firepower is also very irritating. The bullets always fly to the centre of the playing area, no matter what your position or facing is. The lasers overheat amazingly quickly too, so dodging is really the key to getting anywhere on the game. Still, these points are just minor nits, and I'm not one to nit pick. *Mach 3* is an average game and not one to go hunting for. Wait until someone sticks it on a compilation.

Tony Dillon

▼ *Fly under these for bonus points.*



PINK PANTHER

Amiga
Gremlin/Magic Bytes
Price: £19.99

Even panthers need money. Pink one's more so. Our very own Pink Panther has now resorted to going out and working as a butler. Not to wait on his master's every needs, but to burgle his house.

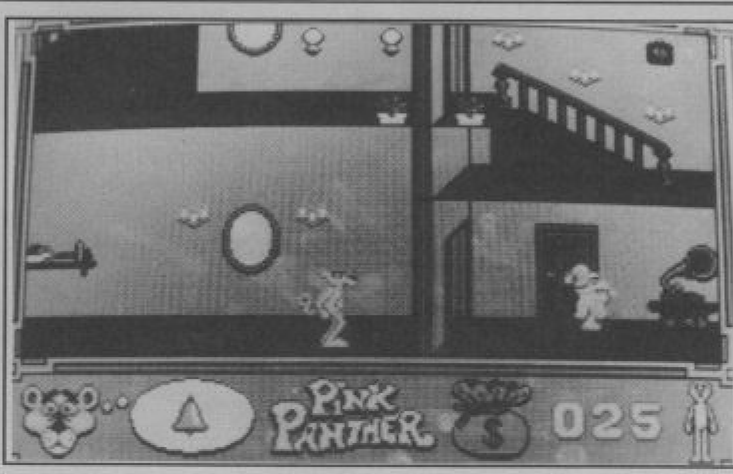
The game starts with Pink waiting for his first task. He can choose the job centre, supermarket or the island paradise. It's advisable to go to the job centre first where the nice man behind the desk tells you of the requirements.

A butler's lot may seem a happy, if not easy one, but the job cards never said anything about the employers being sleepwalkers. And you've guessed it, apart from robbing them blind you have to guide them round the house as well.

To help stop your sleepwalking boss you have a small arsenal of equipment. A carefully placed springboard catapults him into the air and over any objects on the ground. You can also use an inflatable panther to direct him.

Apart from saving the boss and grabbing as much swag as possible there's Inspector Clouseau to deal with. He has been hot on Pink's tail for many years now and will arrest him at a moment's notice.

The people responsible for *Pink Panther*'s graphics have really done a great job in capturing the swaggering style of the panther. Clouseau looks like he has just stepped off the television screen, and the panther's co-star in the cartoon plays the role of the sleepwalker (you know the funny little chap with the big hooter).



▲ *Nice graphics, reminiscent of the cartoon.*

The Pink Panther theme tune is included in the game, although it seems as if the main tune is missing and only the bass line is left. The actual in-game tune is good, very reminiscent of the cartoon.

Pink Panther was a potentially good idea but it's over-shadowed by its extreme and sometimes tedious level of difficulty. Fans of the cartoon will love the game, but I recommend the cartoon as a less strenuous form of entertainment.

Mark Patterson

PINK PANTHER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	8
Audio	7
Toughness	9
Endurance	5
VFM	5

CU RATING: 6

The THREE STOOGES

C.U. Screen Star

Amiga
Mirrorsoft
Price: £29.95

Picture a quiet day in Stoogeville (if such a thing is possible). Our intrepid troublesome threesome are out for a stroll when the ever alert Moe (the one with the bowl-head) hears the sound of someone crying.

The Stooges soon trace the sound to its source, a sweet, kind old dear who runs the home for misplaced children. She explains: "It's Mr Fleecem (boo, hiss), he holds the lease to the Orphanage and unless I pay him everything I owe him he'll tear the place down in 30 days."

The Stooges think. The Stooges decide. "We'll raise the money for you!" they tell her. Ma's three daughters then say that they will marry a Stooge each if they can raise enough cash to pay Mr Fleecem (hiss, boo), repair the Orphanage and then have enough left over for the weddings!

WARNING, when this game is first loaded all is not as it seems. The *Defender Of The Crown* title screen comes up complete with music. Ah, you think, but what has this to do with Moe, Larry and Curly? Well, after a short time they come swaggering on to the screen and stop in the centre to look at the *Defender* logo. Then the digitised voice of Moe says, "This is kids stuff." There is the sound of a record needle being lifted, the music changes to something more light hearted and a picture of the Stooges appears. So don't take back you copy of the *Stooges* thinking it's *Defender* now will you?

The map for *Stooges* is set out like a board game. The three 'squares' either side of you are displayed, and as you move to a new location, the corresponding squares to the right of you are shown. The squares are shown against a wall with Moes' hand pointing to one at random. You have nine seconds to select a loction or Moe loses a finger. If you select a mouse trap by accident snaps down and also removes one of his fingers. When all of Moe's fingers have been decapitated then he can no longer guide the stooges and the game is over.

There are a number of tasks that Moe can select for the Stooges in order to raise cash for the Orphanage. If you select the Prize Fight Curly has to knock out Killer Killduff in six rounds. This is no mean feat as when Curly hears the fetoid strains of to Pop Goes The Weasel he changes into a mean, lean, mauling machine.

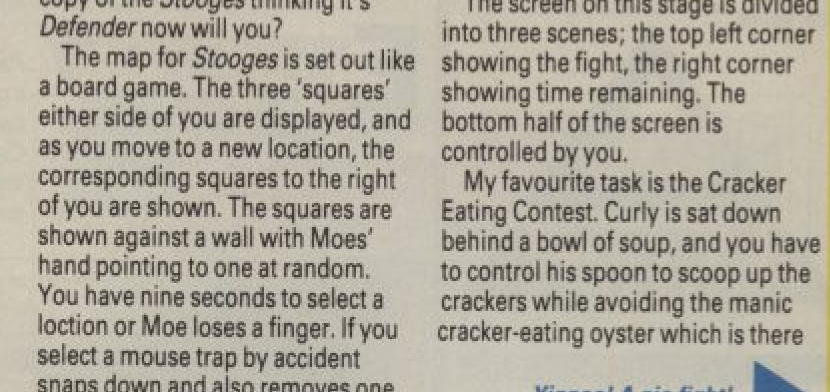
Just before the start of the fight, disaster strikes. Larry (the one with the hair) sits on his Stratovarius (a violin, Philistines) and breaks it. Moe orders him out to get a new one — but the fight has started!

The screen on this stage is divided into three scenes; the top left corner showing the fight, the right corner showing time remaining. The bottom half of the screen is controlled by you.

My favourite task is the Cracker Eating Contest. Curly is sat down behind a bowl of soup, and you have to control his spoon to scoop up the crackers while avoiding the manic cracker-eating oyster which is there also. The graphics on this stage, needless to say, are soup-erb.



Yippee! A pie fight!



Uh-oh! Curly's not so keen to fight.

AMIGA

After a while Moe's selector hand starts to move very fast, so to slow this down you need to select the Slap Fight. When this has been selected your Stooges march onto an empty screen. On arrival Moe starts on the other two for leading him to an empty area and in best Stooges tradition starts slapping them around. You have all the moves like ear twist and eye jab but the other Stooges have their own defences. In reply to the eye jab Larry might put one hand on the bridge of his nose to protect himself. Curly might avoid a head slap by putting his hands on his head and ducking. All this is accompanied by slapping and bashing noises. Occasionally after you have raised a fake fist at one of the Stooges Moe might say "watch this" then you can slap them round the side of the head.

The benefits of this section come when you score a load of direct hits. A gauge shows how fast the pointer hand will be moving, and indicates faster when you miss or are hit and slower when you score a hit.

As well as all this your Stooges can get a job in the hospital, driving around in mini cars. Massochists will obviously enjoy knocking

C.U. Screen Star





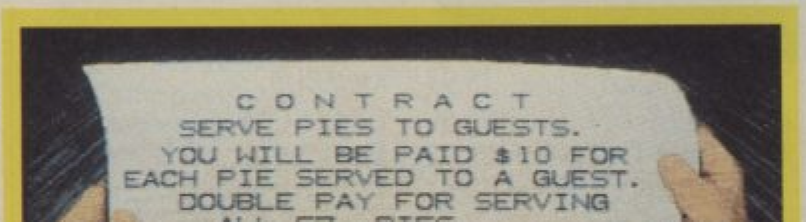
Quit foolin' aroun', Larry!



Lovely grahics.



Oh no! My stradovarius!



As if they would . . .

What a scream!



people off their cruches and off of trollies.

You can take a Chance but this can be pretty hazardous. In one instance the Stooges can end up outside an ice delivery company and a block of ice containing money falls from the building onto Curly's head; hand this in and claim a $210 reward. Another time the Stooges might find a safe; Curly will try to open it by giving it a kick and end up with a broken foot and a bill for $200.

But where would a Stooges game be without a pie fight? Yup for just 25 quid you get a pie fight thrown in free. Take the job as a waiter and you'll find yourself serving up pies to the rich and elite, in one of the worlds most prestigious 'eateries' in the world.

Out of all the games I have played on the Amiga so far I enjoyed *The Stooges* the best; the graphics are wicked, with loadsadigitisation. The Stooges in the street scenes are well defined and it is easy to identify their facial expressions. The digitised sound is used to great effect on all the scenes and really does capture the slapstick brand of their classic comedy.

Most of the scenes are based around seperate short Stooge films and are brilliantly executed. This is probably the only game on any computer that has intentionally set out to make people laugh, and worked.

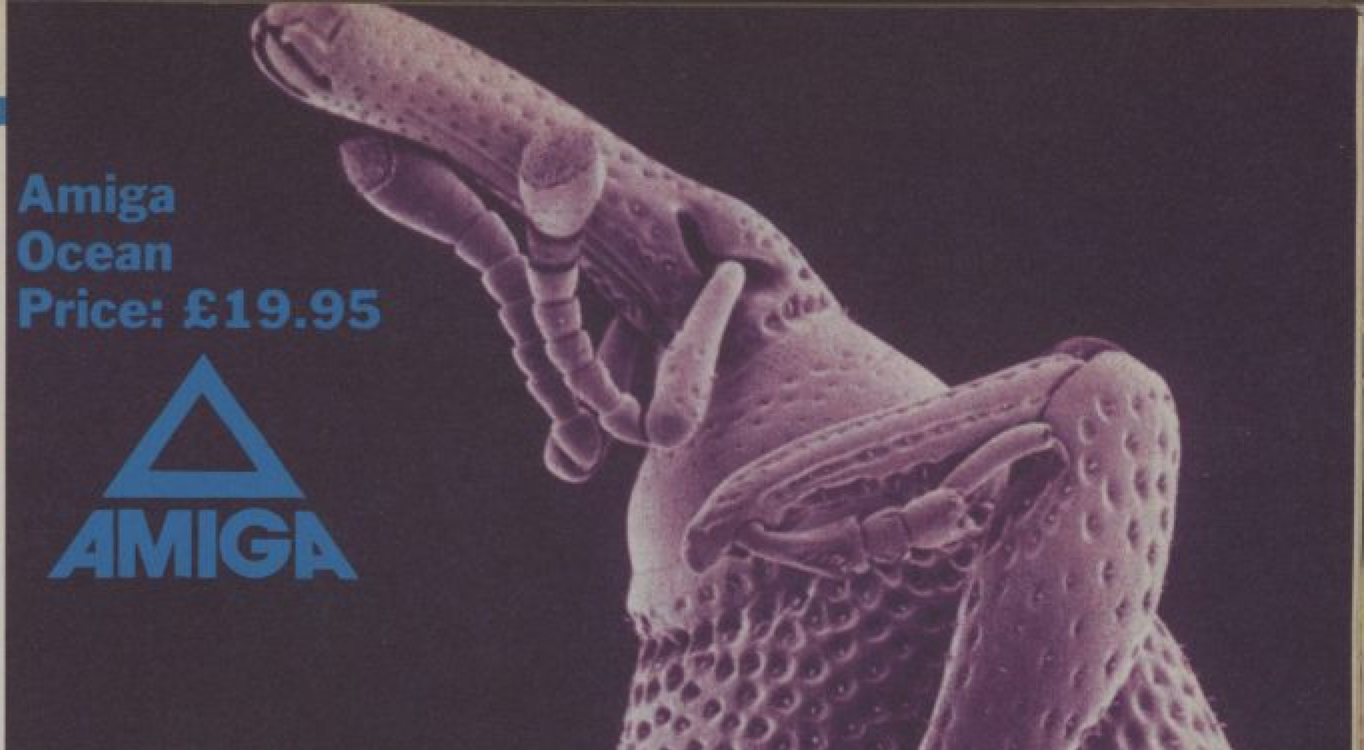
Mark Patterson

THREE STOOGES — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	9
AUDIO	9
TOUGHNESS	8
ENDURANCE	8
VFM	7

CU RATING

8



eco

Idiosyncracy in computer games is something that has been sadly lacking ever since the demise of so many of the great independent software houses. Now, in an industry which has developed to a stage where profit and loss are far more important than quality and individuality, games are almost all created by marketing men who have just licensed *Rambo 77*.

Imagine my surprise, when I saw *Eco*, Ocean's first Amiga product.

Eco is, to quote the manual "a 3D vector simulation of a world populated by a large number of different organisms ranging from simple plant life to complex humanoids." At the beginning of every new game, the computer creates a random world and places you on it. At this point you are a simple insect-like creature. The object is to develop your simple insect into a more developed species. This is done by, well for want of a better word, bonking.

More of that later. A more immediate task is to find food for your insect to allow him to keep on trundling around looking for a suitable mate. This may sound like an ideal (if a little boring) life, but things are made considerably more difficult by the fact that as you are but a small insect, you represent a tasty morsel for other, larger and hungrier creatures who just happen to be wandering around the world.

This means that much of your time is spent making sure that no predator is about to make you his Lean-Cuisine for the day.

Should you be lucky enough to find a suitable mate — and get near enough to it — you are then all set to reproduce. The screen then changes from the main 'scanning' screen to a gene designer screen (nothing to do with Levi's).

An enlarged version of the genetic code indicator found at the bottom of the scanning screen is shown, along with three different views of the offspring. You become the offspring as soon as you have reproduced so it is worth making sure you have altered the right bits. Changing the shape and size of your baby is done by altering its genes. Some alterations make dramatic and immediately valuable changes, while others are more subtle, and sometimes totally useless.

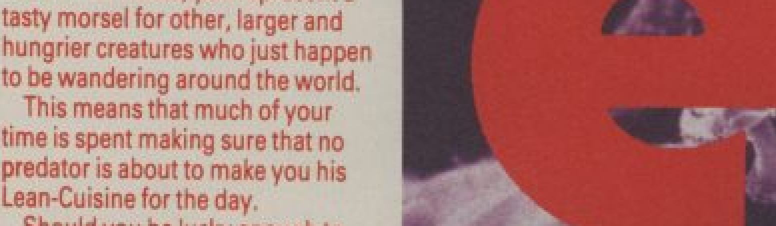
Graphically, *Eco* is reminescent of games such as *Starglider*, with excellently defined 3D vector graphics of a wide variety of characters and a display/operations panel taking up the lower half of the screen. The sound, too, is well up to scratch, with a couple of neat little ditties to start the game and adequate effects.

Eco is a game that will appeal to a huge variety of Amiga enthusiasts. Not only does it have elements of arcade games, but the whole concept is totally original, and thoroughly enjoyable.

Ian J. Frogsac

ECO	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY
Video	7
Audio	7
Toughness	8
Endurance	8
VFM	8
CU RATING	8

Eco: ***nature red in tooth and claw . . .***





Berlimey O'Riley, we've had loadsapleas for tips for this little chestnut. And is it surprising? Paul Woakes' classic arcade adventure baffled, bamboozled and befuddled 64 owners over two years ago, and is no doubt doing the same to Amiga owners at the moment. So if you're bogged down with the Amiga version, or if you simply missed out on all the useful hints and tips the first time around, try these for size . . .

ESCAPE FROM TARG

There are two ways of doing this. You can either rent a spaceship from Hertz, or use the Interstellar Craft in conjunction with the Novadrive. It costs 999,999 credits to rent a suitable ship, so it's important you make as much dosh as possible. Here's a list of where all the smart cookies are dropping their objects . . .

The CATERING PROVISIONS (found in the underground complex at 09-05) should be left in the KITCHEN (second level of the Palyar Colony Craft) to net 60,000 credits.

Leave the GOLD (found in a room just off the hangar at 81-33) in the EXCHEQUER (next to the KITCHEN) for a cool 100,000.

The ESSENTIAL 12939 SUPPLY (12939 reads PEPSI if you look at it from behind — and you can find it in the POWER ROOM in the Mechanoid Complex at 03-00) is worth 50,000 credits when dropped in the CONFERENCE ROOM (second level of the Palyar Colony Craft).

Take the MECHANOID LEADER from the BRIEFING ROOM in the Mechanoid Complex at 03-00 and drop him in the PALYAR INTERVIEW ROOM (second level of the Colony Craft) for a 250,000 credit reward.

However, it's worth bearing in mind that the Mechanoids won't pay you a thing if you've got or sold their leader, so leave him alone until you've screwed them for every credit you can.

40,000 credits are yours if you drop the MEDICAL SUPPLIES (found in the complex at 09-05) in the INFIRMARY (lowest level of the Palyar Colony Craft). The DATABANK is found in the complex at 03-15, and is worth 100,000 credits if you leave it in the CONTROL ROOM (lowest level of the Colony Craft). However getting the Databank is a wee bit tricky, since you have to teleport from 81-35 and you need loadsakeys.

Go to the MECHANOID LABORATORY in the complex at 03-00, armed with the WINCHESTER taken from the complex at **-**, and drop it for 250,000 credits. Take the NEUTRON FUEL (it's in a room in the complex at 09-05, and you can only carry it if you've got either the ANTIGRAV or the KITCHEN SINK) to the MECHANOID FUEL STORES in the complex at 03-00 for a 250,000 credit reward. The MECHANOID POWER ROOM in the complex at 03-00 is the place to be when you drop the ENERGY CRYSTAL (from a room just off the hangar at 09-06) — you get a juicy 100,000 credits. The USEFUL ARMAMENT (found in a room just off the hangar at 11-113) earns you 120,000 credits when you drop it in the MECHANOID ARMOURY (a room in the complex at 03-00).

Pay a visit to the MECHANOID STORES (just off the hangar at 03-00) and collect 80,000 credits for dropping the LARGE BOX (taken from the complex at 09-06).

USEFUL OBJECTS

Use the ANTENNA (found in a room near(ish) to the hangar at 09-05. But beware! Don't go into the room beyond — it's the PRISON, and you can only get out by 'quitting') in the COMMUNICATIONS ROOM (in the complex at 09-06) to make the radio work. Call Hertz and rent a ship — provided you have sufficient spondoolas.

Pick up heavy objects, such as ships, with the ANTIGRAV (found in a room in the complex at 09-05).

Reassemble previously wrecked buildings with the ANTI-



MERC

AMIGA TIP

TIME BOMB. This handy device sits in a room on the bottom floor of the Palyar Colony Craft. Simply point your craft at a wreckage and press the fire button — the building will reassemble itself before your very eyes.

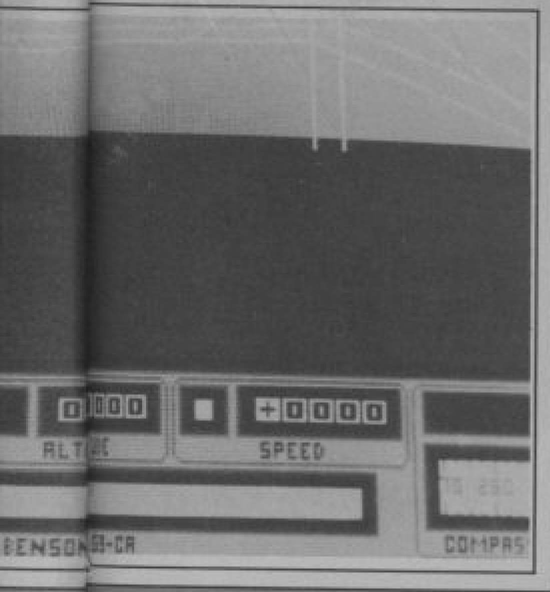
Throw a little light on any subject — well, the dark ones, anyway — with the PHOTON EMITTER. Pick it up from a room just off the hangar at 09-05. The SIGHTS can be acquired from a room adjacent to the hangar at 09-06. However they're not very useful as they only aid your aim.

Pick up the POWERAMP from a room in the complex at 09-06 to boost the maximum spped of the Dominion Dart to a healthy 9.900.

The NOVADRIVE, on the other hand, is located at **-**, and allows the Intergalactic Craft to function.

Pick up the METAL DETECTOR from one of the rooms in the complex at 09-05. Now you can tell who owns which building



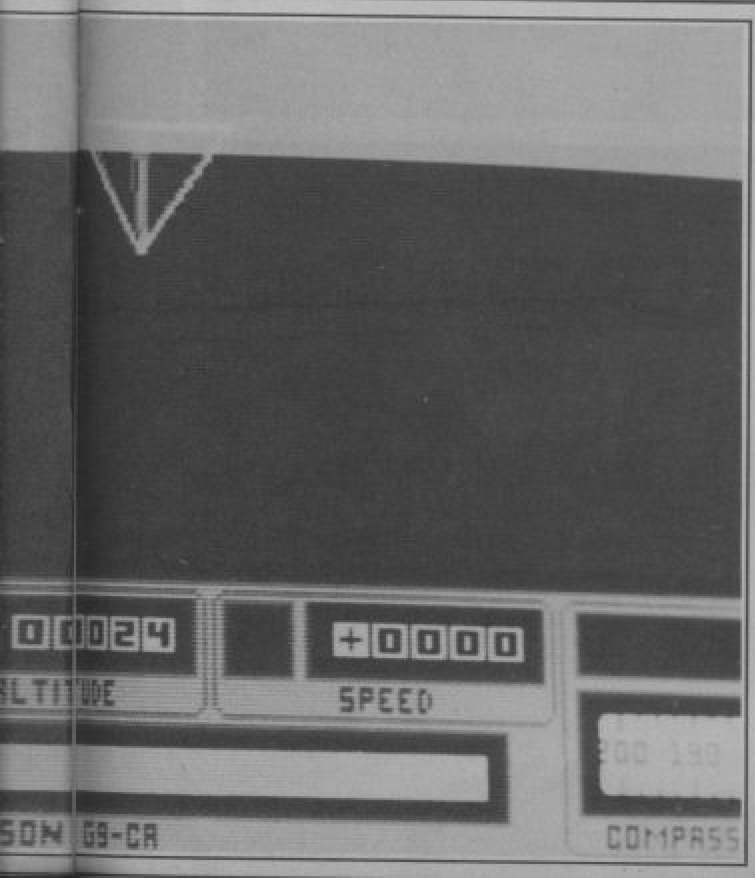


ENARY
PS

on the surface of Targ by the colour of the information panel. RED means that no-one owns the building, while GREEN represents a building owned by Palyars and BLUE means a building occupied by Mechanoids. "But what possible use is this?" you may ask. Well, if you destroy all the Mechanoid buildings you get a 500,000 credit reward from the Palyars!

MERCENARY TRIVIA

Shoot NOVABILL at 03-08 to be told WELL DONE!
Shoot any of the Commodore signs on Targ to be called a traitor.
Shoot any of the Atari signs on Targ to be told GOOD SHOW!



If you shoot the Encounter sign at 02-03 you will be told: YOU HAVE JUST DESTROYED THE AUTHOR'S ADVERT . . . FROM NOW ON THINGS ARE . . . GOING TO BE TOUGH . . . Now, if you try to leave the planet you will be told: THE AUTHOR WON'T LET YOU LEAVE UNTIL YOU FIX HIS ADVERT. So either use the ANTI-TIME BOMB to repair the sign or, better still, don't shoot it in the first place.
The spaceship flitting back and forth between 00-00 and 00-15, at an altitude of 500 and a speed of 100 is the Palyar Commanders Brother-In-Law's New Ship — as you will find out on destroying it!
The CHEESE (found in a room just off the hangar at 11-13) can be flown! Yes, it's a different kind of Kraft (ouch) — and very fast it flies too!
The KITCHEN SINK (found in the KITCHEN (where else?) on the second level of the Palyar Colony Craft) can be used to pick up virtually ANY object! Simply drop all objects in your possession then pick up the kitchen sink. You can now pick up the skull and crossbones symbols, ships, objects already sold, and, more importantly, the SPIDER'S WEB. Eh? Yes, the spider's web is in fact a highly versatile skeleton key which can unlock ANY door!
As far as I can remember, you can re-sell most of the objects to the other side — once you've picked 'em up with the kitchen sink. Give it a whirl . . .
The PYRAMID at 75-39 has a most unusual function. It allows you to position objects in the AIR! Crazy but true . . . If you accidentally fall off or out of the Palyar Colony Craft and happen to possess the cheese — fear not! Press L to stop falling, drop the cheese and board it. You can now fly around!

TRANSPORTERS

Doors bearing a line from top left to bottom right are exits only.
Doors bearing a line from top right to bottom left are transporter entrances only.
Doors bearing a cross indicate a transporter which will take you either way.

GENERAL HINTS

Make a photocopy of the maps provided in the Survival Kit and mark on them relevant details, such as positions of objects and the destinations of the transporters.
When an enemy ship attacks, there are three ways of dealing with it.
Crash. This is good, see, because when the enemy bullet hits you, your ship doesn't get destroyed.
Alternatively, you can shoot the ship before it shoots you. Fly at a speed of -625 so that the enemy follows you and you can pick it off with ease.
And the third method? Crash-land, then board the ship. As the enemy ship flies through you, shoot it.
You need a pass to use the elevator at 03-15. So teleport there instead from 81-35, ensuring you take either load-sakeys or the spider's web and the Photon Emitter. Walk around until you find a door marked with a skull and crossbones.
Enter it and you will find the Interstellar Ship, which an be used with the Novadrive to escape. The Pass is in a room adjacent to the hangar.
Right, that's all for now. If you find anything interesting on your travels, drop me a line — if it's worth printing, we'll print it! Tune in next month and I'll give you some soopa advice on The Second City . . .

GOLDRUNNER
(Microdeal)

Start a one player game and crash into the first building. Now hold down f5 until the status screen appears. You should now be able to fly unscathed through everything. Coo-ee. Thanks to The Trickster from Bearsden in Glasgow for this useful piece of information.

TEST DRIVE
(Electronic Arts)

Another handy hint from The Trickster. To avoid going over the cliff or crashing into it, hold down the fire button. The car will now glide around corners at a constant speed. Oh — but watch out for the other cars. Release the fire button to accelerate or deccelerate.

GRANDSLAM

PRESENTS

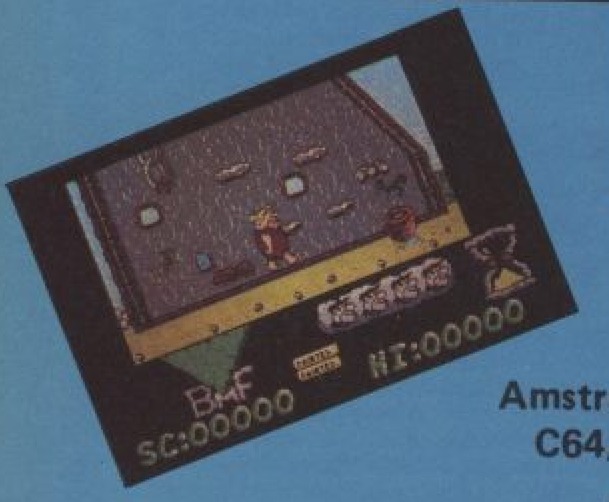
THE FLINTSTONES

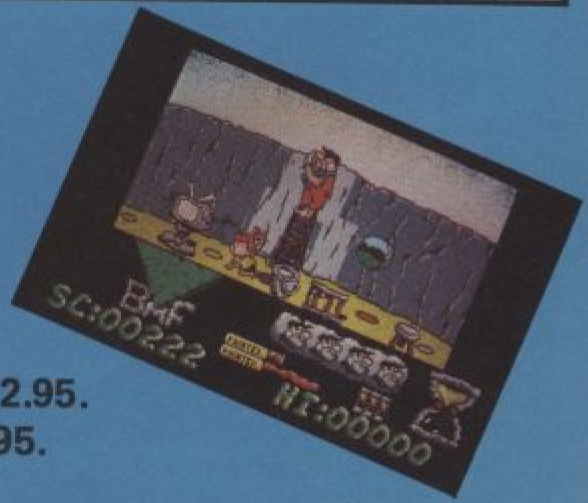
©1988 Hanna Barbera Productions Inc.

Bowl or Bust! Fred and Barney want to go bowling but Wilma has other ideas . . . . . . and guess who's left holding the baby? Join The Flintstones in this officially licensed arcade adventure based on the famous Hanna Barbera cartoon characters.









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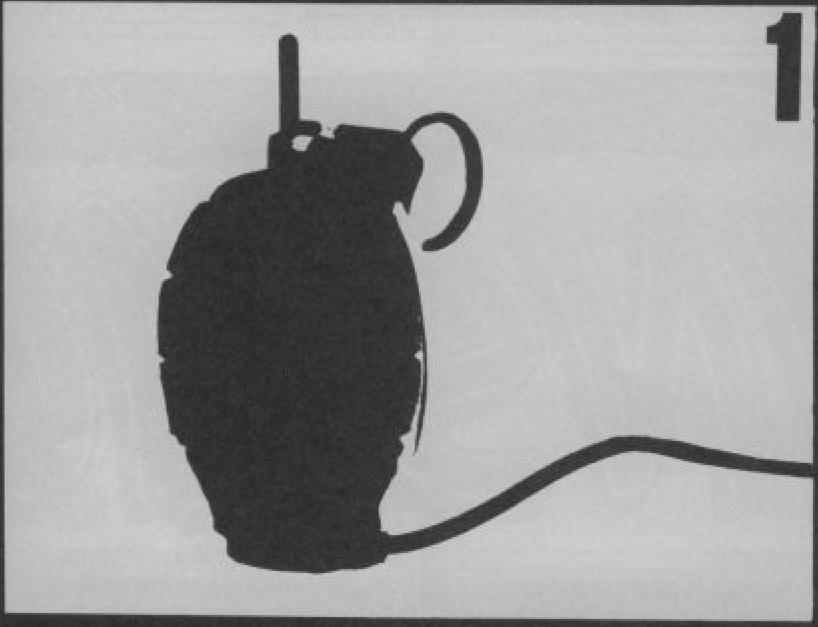
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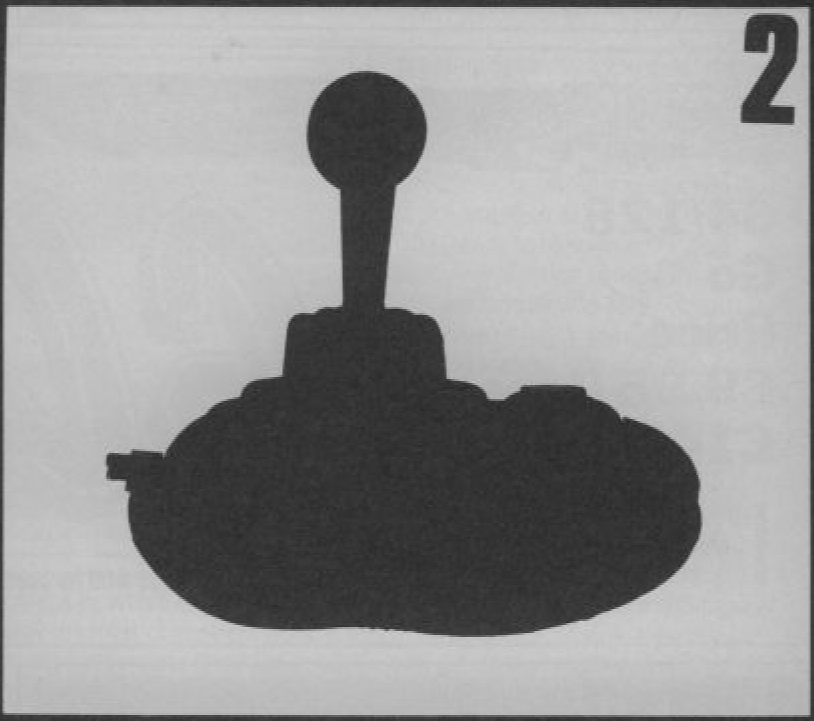
TAKE SOME STICK

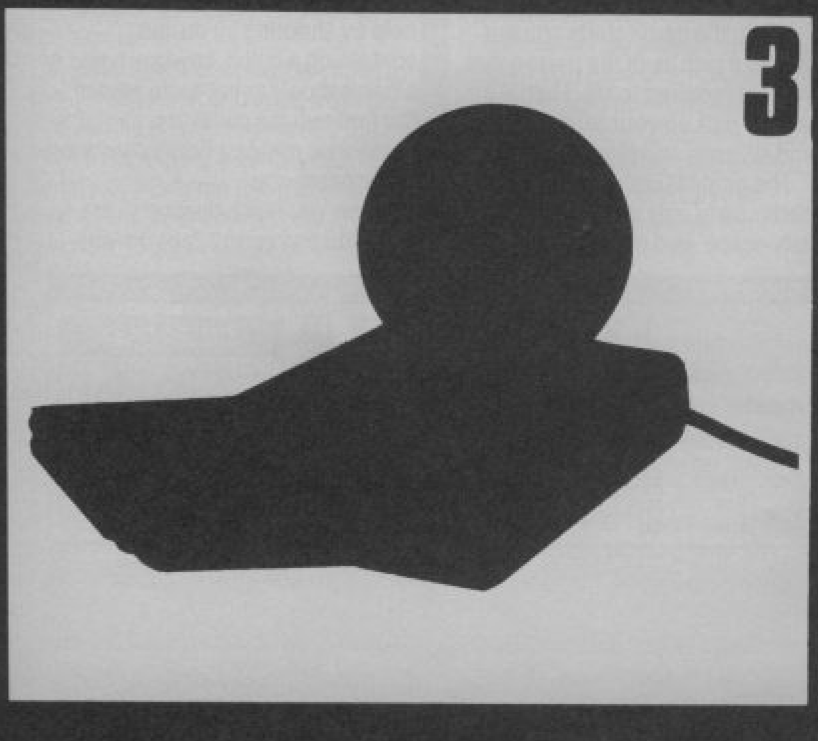
50 JOYSTICKS TO BE WON!

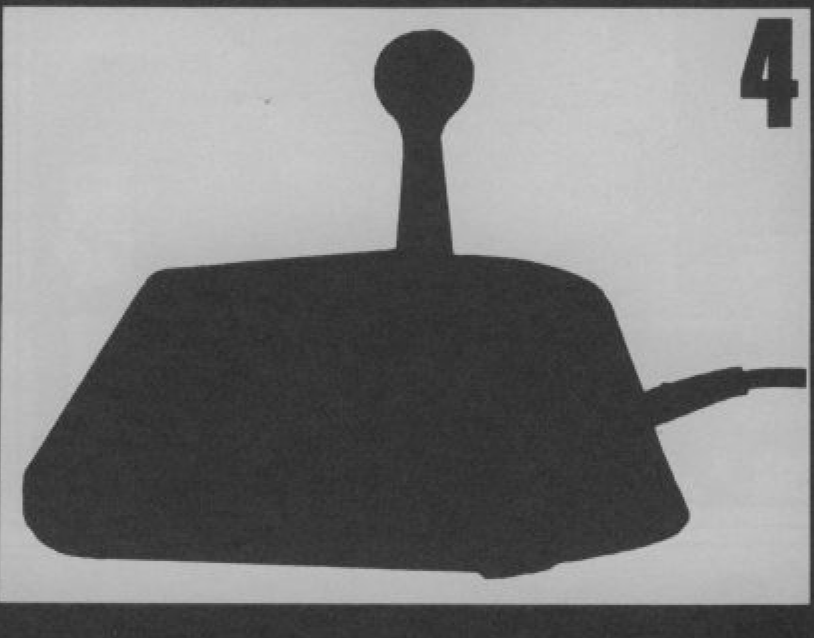
Thanks to those incredibly nice people at Euromax, we've got not ten, not fifteen, not even twenty but a totally awesome TWENTY-FIVE Professional joysticks to give away. And that's not all — there's 25 runner-up prizes of Wizcards. So how, you ask, may one get hold of these prizes? Easy. Just prove how much you know about sticks 'n' their cousins by identifying them from their silouhettes.

When you think you've got the right answers, send them to us at STICKY COMPO, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU. The closing date is May 18th, so you'd better get scribbling. Remember, the first 25 correct answers will receive a Euromax Professional, with the next 25 getting a lovely Wizcard each. Now that can't be bad.


1


2

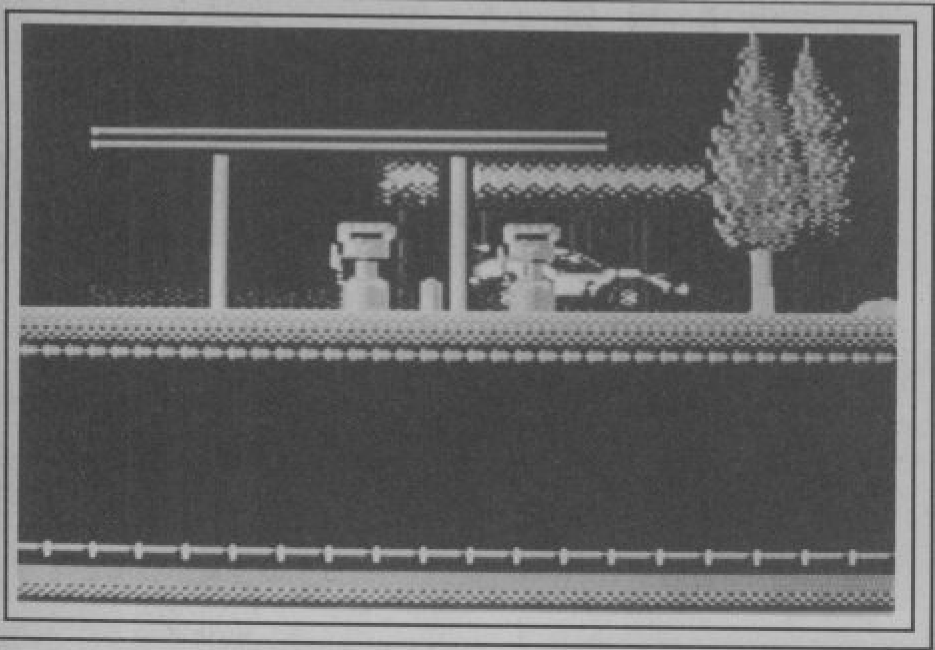

3


4

ROAD WARRIOR

64/128
CRL

Price: £9.95/cass
£14.95/dsk



Here's a real pile of bilge from CRL, about which I might not have been so critical had the price been a bit more reasonable. To charge a tenner for this is out of order. On top of which whoever writes their press releases is illiterate, get this: "CRL has come up with some real hot motores for you . . . The hell's Angles have been out in full force".

So, what do you get for your money, apart from a good laugh? It's a *Spy Hunter*-type game where you view the hot rod from above as it stays in the middle of the screen and the road scrolls past. If you push the joystick right, the car speeds up, left and it slows down, wiggle the joystick up and down and you can steer the car. Wow! Every now and then one of the "Hell's Angles" pootles up from behind and you blast him. This, with the odd slight variation, is it.

This is only Level One though. On Level Two, as well as angles there are many more motores. It's bad news to shoot up the motores because you lose points, so you have to make those tricky split second decisions. A graphic appears up your rear, is it an angle, or a motore? You must decide without

ROAD WARRIOR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

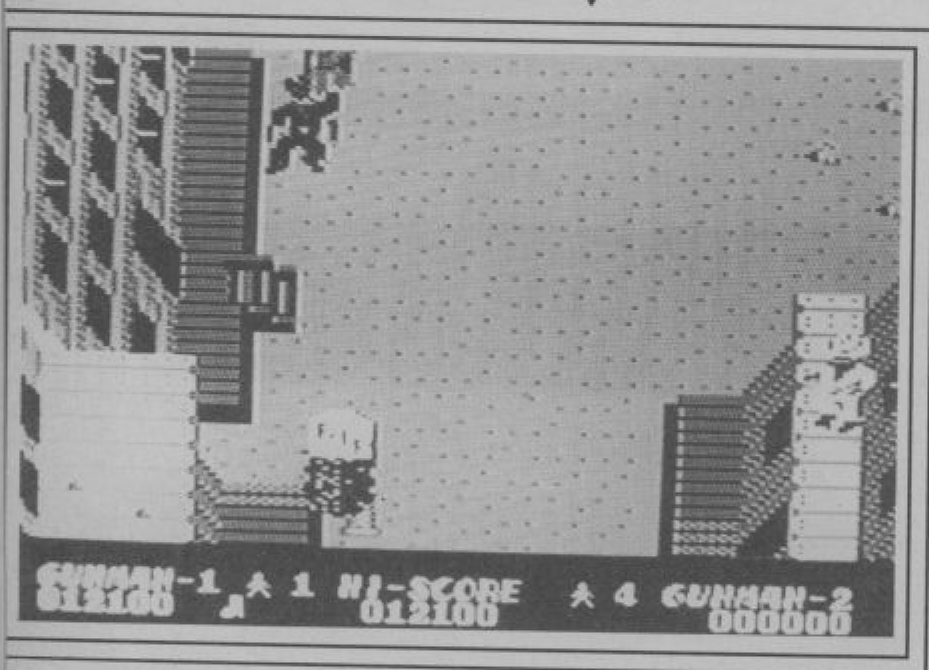
3

GUNSMO

64/128
Go
Price:
£9.95 (tape)
£14.95 (disc)

I have seen many a Wild West game as I mosey on down with life. But, I have never seen one of this quality. It is bad, real bad. Let me explain.

Gunsmoke dies with its boots on.



You're a Western marshall assigned to clean up Dodge (you got anything more original?) City.

When the game starts you are shown a picture of the person that you are required to kill. Then it's time to pick up your trusty Smith and Wesson and blast some perps.

The game takes place on a particularly ugly vertically scrolling 'city-scape' and none too good it looks. You are always under attack from gun-wielding baddies whether they're walking down the street or hiding in buildings. You can gain help by shooting oil drums, containing a bullet, cowboy boots or a horseshoe. I'm not quite sure of the first two but collecting a horseshoe makes a horsey grow out underneath you.

When you reach the end of the level you end up in a face off with

GUNSMOKE — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

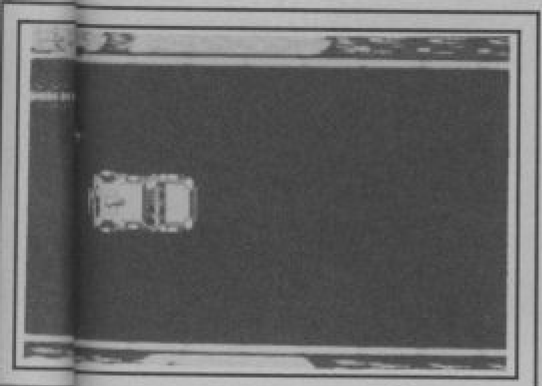
VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

2

hesitation and blast it to bits or hold your fire accordingly. Once you're through the early levels you have angles and motores coming at you from all directions, not to mention parked motores.

To add a bit of variety you get the choice of four motores of your own,



Road Warrior — *dyslexic driving.*

and you even get to stop at the garage to refuel. If you fail to refuel, or to blast the required number of angles for a particular level, one of the angles mows you down as you run down the track, though why you have to get out of the car at all defeats me. Despite that it was the only bit of the game I really enjoyed.

Ken McMahon

OKE

the criminal, set apart from others in that he has an energy rating, moves twice as fast and is twice as deadly. Kill him and you get to go through to the next level.

It takes only a couple of minutes to complete a level, and apart from the end baddie being tougher and the scenery changing slightly you simply do the same thing over and over again. Your character is awkward to control. The graphics are large, blocky and badly animated. The sound is flat and uninspiring. The whole gameplay has as much appeal as a fat man with B.O.

This is a classic example of expensive bad quality software. It's very similar to the cowboy game on SEUCK, except that was better. Avoid this like you would avoid a rotting herring's underware in a heat wave.

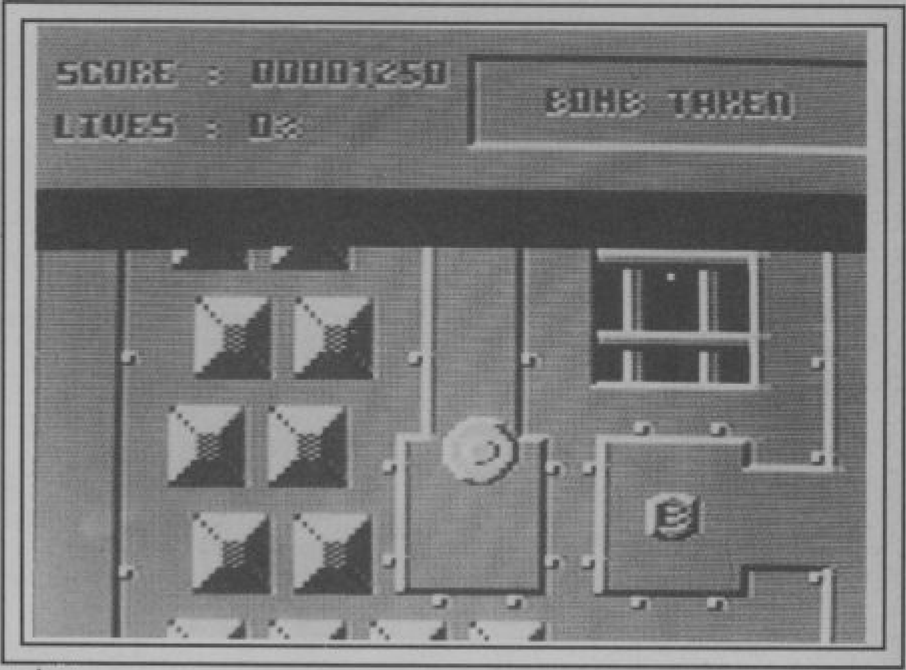
Mark Patterson

UNITRAX

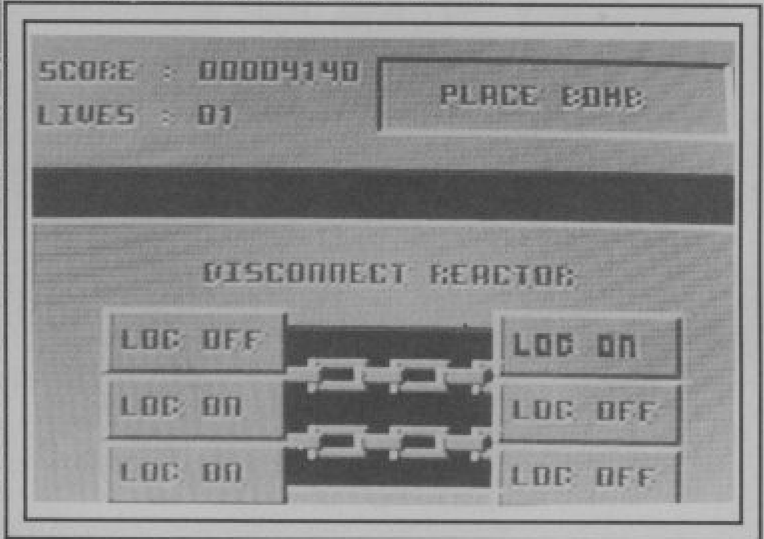
64/128 Streetwise Price: £8.95/cass

Unitrax eh? Sounds a bit like *Parallax* to me, looks a bit like it too as it happens, only not as good. To be fair the storyline is unrecognisable, but then you don't want to give the game away too soon, do you?

The year is 2410 AD and a whole bundle of nuclear power stations which were supposedly safe forever are about to make Chernobyl look like a damp squib. Not that this really matters any more because the Earth was vapourised long ago in World War IV (why weren't the power stations destroyed as well?).



Unitrax — poor man's Parallax



So what's all the fuss about?

Well, a bunch of smart cookie astronauts left the party before the fireworks started and set up a space colony. You have been chosen to save everyone from nuclear destruction. How do you do it? Isn't it obvious? You blow up the reactors. I always said it doesn't pay to examine these storylines too closely.

And so to the game. You are dropped on the workstation by a mothership and must immediately set about looking for a bomb. The cowpat style craft follows prelaid tracks which form a maze on the workstation surface — no fancy diagonal scrolling — it's strictly up/down, left/right. What happens next is that you get blasted from all sides by a bunch of not very friendly muties.

Here's where the real frustration creeps in, which is all to do with the way the joystick controls work. A tap in the appropriate direction sends you on your way and you keep going until you pull in another direction. This makes turns tricky, because you have to hit the stick at the exact moment you pass a junction. If you miss, you have to go into reverse and try again.

All of which would be fine were it not for the fact that you fire with the joystick as well. I don't mean the fire button only, no no. As well as pressing the button you must push the joystick in the direction you want the bullets to travel. This is great because you can shoot in eight directions, but what you can't do is shoot and steer at the same time. So what tends to happen is that you spot your junction coming up and prepare to make the split-second turn when a nasty appears heading straight for you. You have two choices; ignore it and take the energy loss consequences when you collide, or blast it away and miss the turn.

If you ever manage to get the hang of this you can head for a reactor with your bomb. To blow it up successfully you have to hit three of those nudge/gamble type things you get on fruit machines. They say log on/log off, and you have to hit the button when log on is lit. I wouldn't say this was easy, but I couldn't get it wrong even when I tried.

To be honest *Unitrax* is, on the whole, unremarkable, but I like to be positive about these things, so I'll say that the sound is nice and the pack picture is really great.

Ken McMahon

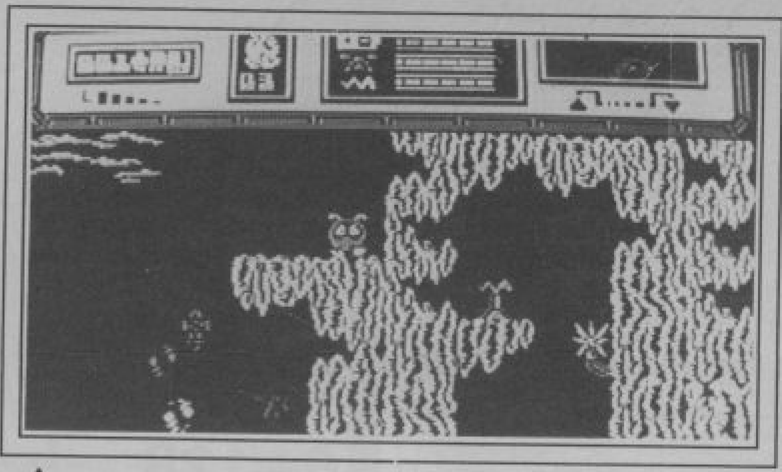
UNITRAX — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	6
Audio	6
Toughness	6
Endurance	4
VFM	4

CU RATING

5

CHEAPO ROUND-UP



Starquake.

SUBTERRANEA
Rack It

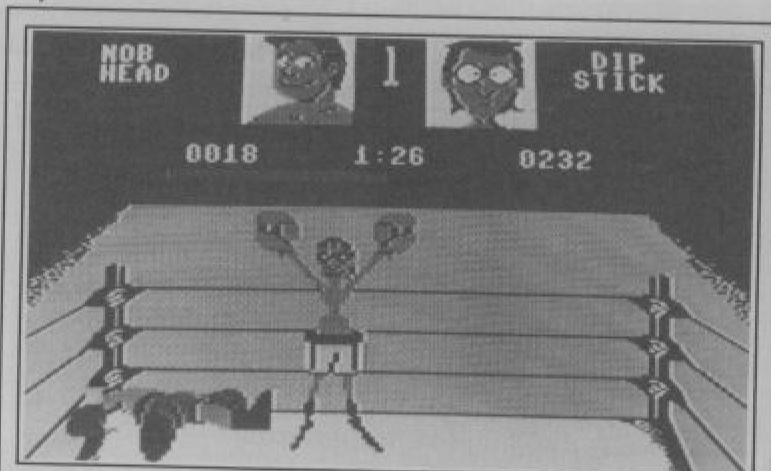
Zip through 16 mine caverns rescuing trapped miners while avoiding rogue mining droids. Blocking your way are hazards such as force fields, rock walls, and large boulders smack in the middle of a cavern forcing you into an almost impossible situation involving large spiky rocks sticking out from the top and bottom of the screens on most levels (Fer-yew). *Subterranea* has some pretty graphics and is fun to play but it gets too dull too quickly. If you're too tight to fork out for *IO* buy *Subterranea* for a little taste of what you're missing. **(6)**

TRAILBLAZER
Ricochet

Trailblazer is a whizzo 3D race game, previously released by Gremlin. Your ball hurtles down the on-coming track at breakneck speeds, and has to negotiate a chequered pattern of different coloured squares, each colour with a different trait. Blue squares bounce you into the air, purple throw you backwards, cyan reverse your controls, green speed you up, and red slow you down. If you have a chum handy, why not play with him or her (Oo-er)? Stacks of playability in this crucial re-release. Don't miss it. **(9)**

FIGHT NIGHT
Power House

Fight Night features some pretty cartoon-style characters as you battle your way to becoming champeen. As well as the normal fight option you can build your own boxer from bits of the resident fighters already on tape. You can then have them training on a punch bag or have two of your own boxers sparring against each other. The majority of bash 'em up games feature a dazzling array of moves, but *Fight Night* earns top marks for simplicity with only a few punches and fakes. A year ago *Fight Night* was pretty popular for a tenner and at two quid is well worth buying. **(8)**.



Fight Night.

DAMBUSTERS
Power House

Ever fancied flying a Lancaster bomber? Not to mention navigating, engineering, and gunning? Well you have to do all of these in *Dambusters*. You must of heard of the famous bouncing bomb? You haven't? Well pay more attention in history. What it boils down to is that you have to blow up a dam with a special bomb that bounces on water. *Dambusters* lacks variety as the only mission is the dam run. If you are into simulators this deserves a look. Otherwise steer well clear. **(6)**

STARQUAKE
Ricochet

Get this: a hideously unstable planet has just popped out of a black hole and is in danger of imploding. If it does implode it will cause the whole universe to top itself in a cataclismic starquake (Oo-er). A little guy called BLOB has been selected by default (everyone else had accidently pranged their space craft) to journey to the centre of the planet to rebuild its core with bits of old junk. Armed with only his trusty laser, a shield and a limited supply of DIY platforms he goes forth. This ace arcade adventure has to contend for cheapo of the month. It's totally spondiscous, know what I mean? **(9)**

5th QUADRANT
Ricochet

Aye, it be many a moon since I first layed my eye on this one. I didn't care much for it then, and I don't much care for it now. You control five little robots on board a ship which has been taken over by the hideous Zimen. In a desperate race against time your robots have to free the ship's crew before their energy runs out. There are 230 stunningly repetitive locations in what has to be the worst choice for a re-release in ages. Avoid this like you would avoid — well, something bad. **(2)**

Trailblazer.



CHEAPO ROUND-UP

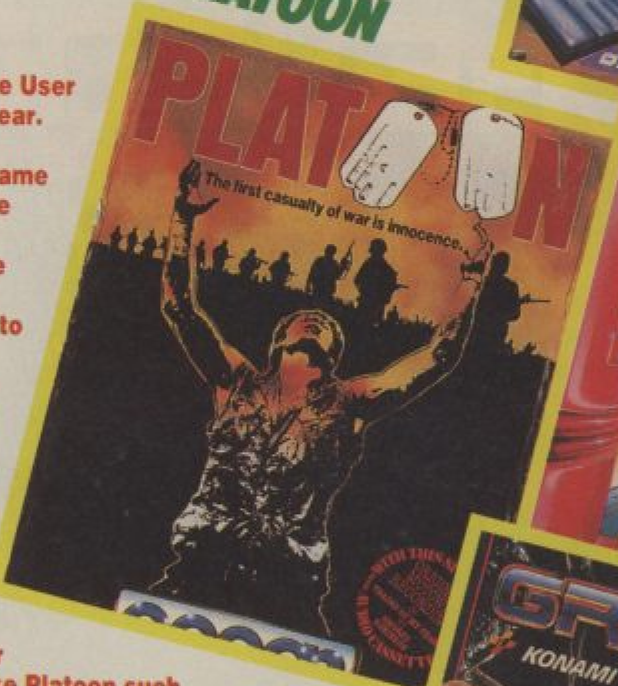

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REVENGE OF DOH
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..the name of the game
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Letters

A meagre moan

Your mag is the best for Amiga games, so every month I trot down to the newsagents to buy it. Every review I have agreed with except the *Dark Castle* review. I bought the game because of the review and layed out £25. Still, maybe you enjoyed it. I write to you about the "crucial poll results" because I noticed what incredibly bad taste in music everyone has, except Mark Patterson who used captions from the Bowie record Space Oddity in his review of *Apollo 18*. Does he really like David Bowie and thus have good taste? With that I will leave.
Reuben Wilkinson,
Westland Green,
Herts
P.S. Did you know that on *Xenon* if you kill yourself after you have killed the first sentinel on Level Two, you can go through the rest of the level without hassle from any aliens?

Mark did enjoy *Dark Castle*. And no, he doesn't like Bowie — it was Mike who did the captions, and funnily enough he doesn't like him either.

Cold turkey

Yo Commo User. How you doing, this here's the Space Chicken communicating to you through the amazingly cool Royal Mail. Just imagine it, there I was cruising round the universe in my Snasusian Ward Cruiser GTI when I landed on your laughable planet, to air some views.

Your mag is slick and cool, but it lacks one thing — me! So here I am.

Here's my views:
1. Spectrums are for squids.
2. ZZAP! is for squids.
3. US Gold really means Useless Squid Games (did you see *Out Run*!).
4. *Gauntlet* for the home computer is boring.
5. There are more *Uridium* clones than E Numbers on a Pot Noodle.
6. Michael Jackson is really a muppet.

Another thing, why don't you have a poll to see what the readers think of in-game music and give their top ten?

Space Chicken's in-game music favourites:
1. Hall of Fame in *Parallax*
2. *Terra Cresta*
3. *Combat School*
4. *Arcade Classics*
5. *I-Ball*

Yeah, some real cool sound there, I can tell you.

See ya soon,
Space Chicken,
Carmarthen,
Dyfed.

!

Luv 'em

Great, Fab, Brill (and many other words like that). What am I on about? Well it's the *Double Dragon* map. Could this be the start of many arcade hints and maps in CU? I hope so, as many arcade games are mappable like *A.P.B.* and *Shinobi*.

Now on to a letter from a certain Michael Hodgson who slags off Gary Penn. Why? Gary was great in ZZAP! and hopefully he's gonna be great in CU as well. Personally I think he has been very truthful in his reviews. If Gary is so bad why did he get voted 5th most wonderful bod?
Rik Livingh,
Langford,
Avon

Glad you liked the *Double Dragon* map. There's more to come — provided someone can give us a hand completing the games. Any offers? Gary probably sent in all the votes

Crabby Ken

I think your mag is brilliant and I read each one 7-8 times. It's a pity that each mag is out of date by the time it reaches Oz. But nevertheless, the reviews are excellent and the reviewers are the best. By the way, how old is Ken McMahon? (sometimes he's crabby enough to be well into the eighties!)

Anyway, keep sending the mags to Aussie land, even if they come late. Better late than never!
Chris Bulav,
South Australia
P.S. Get Ken annoyed by saying *Ninja Master* rules!

Actually, Ken's 79, so there. As for *Ninja Master* — he growled when we mentioned it.

Gerremoff!

Arrgh! Help. Aarrghh! Get 'em off! What is the matter with me? Am I some kind of pyscho? Allergic to dust? No! I am fed up with revamped games being brought out — *Arkanoid* $49!!! Wow! *Ricochet* — Gravy? And *Traz. Breakout*, I thought that went out with flares (sorry, they've come back in) — the dinasaurs. OK so they've added a few frills, but it's still the same old boring game. And $49 for *Arkanoid*! Rip off!

Out Run was crap — I hope *Afterburner* isn't going to be as bad. Anyway, now I've made my point, goodbye!
Andrew Sedgwick,
Epnorth,
S. Yorks

You have a point — but bear in mind that *BreakOut* clones still sell.

Erratic errors

I'd like to point out how erratic the quality of CU is: it ranges in approximately four month bouts from excellent to average and to irritatingly childish. At the moment you are nearing the latter state. Why do your reviewers attempt to use American street talk — it's so weak. Soon it will totally infiltrate your magazine, "Yo! Git down y'all and stoke yor thang — Def with the game!" etc. It's crap and embarrassing — are they ashamed of being British or are they just a bunch of prats wanting to be American? Cut it out and get back to your wit of three of four months ago, please.

The second and final dig in the gut — I know this is petty but it really bugs me, is the amount of factual errors your reviewers (excluding Mike Pattenden and Gary Penn) make in their reviews. Two examples I found at a glance in the April edition are Ken



McMahon's review of *Thrust* and Nick Kelly's review of *Blasteroids*. McMahon stated that *Thrust* was converted from a BBC to a Commodore 64 which is horse s★★t. It appeared first on the 64 from Firebird and later a BBC version was licensed to superior. Also it is a rip off of *Gravitar* in the arcades (a damned good idea and game). Kelly's review of *Blasteroids* remarked that the control method of *Asteroids'* rotate buttons had been replaced with joystick — I always thought one of those twiddly knobs was called a paddle — were *Arkanoid, Tempest, BreakOut* and the Atari VCS brought out such a long time ago that he's forgotten the names of the controllers?

On the plus side — everything else is fine and I like it, but try and sort out the facts please.
Bac,
Benfleet,
Essex

Nick sez: "Goo goo, ga ga, blibble blibble." OK, we'll sort out the facts: Ken reviewed *Thrust II*, not *Thrust*.

A big chest

I've been meaning to write for a while about numerous



things which have outraged me or met with my coveted seal of approval, so I thought I'd get everything off my chest once and for all in this epic.

You can probably tell I'm a bit of an old-hand at writing letters to computer magazines. I know what you boys want (ooh-er). I've had five letters published in computer rags, two of which were in CU under pseudonyms (clue: think of nipples and then skoolspeak). Yes it's me, the very same!

On the subject of prolific letter writers. Dave B's snide little comment about Simon Kavanagh, calling him a greedy git because he wrote in again after getting the letter of the month award, really annoyed me. This bloke Kavanagh can actually write interestingly and wittily: a damn sight better than Dave B's pathetic attempt. In fact I don't blame Mr B for not giving his full name.

Now what's left on my chest? Oh yes, the subject of computer games. I find them really boring now. The last thing that held my interest for any appreciable length of time was *Buggy Boy*, and that too was cast away along with the rest in early January! I don't buy games any more. I know it's been said before but they are too pricey. If a game does catch my eye, like *Platoon*, I just wait. And wait. And wait. Then lo and behold it will appear on a compilation: mark my words. If I don't think a game will be released on a compilation, I wait until one of those faberooni software mail-order companies offer it to the public at a more reasonable price, ie: around a fiver.

People faced with the same problems as me, however, who lack my divine wisdom, turn to pirating games. Frankly they are, as you so cleverly put it many moons ago, pillocks. Firstly it is illegal. Laws are necessary as books such as The Lord Of The Flies have so brilliantly demonstrated. However that may not mean a great deal to your brainless big-time pirate. Can't they understand that if they stopped pirating games, the 'evil' software houses would have no alternative but to reduce prices, or lose all credibility amongst customers. Your average pirate's response would be "But my games are just a drop in the ocean (or US Gold, or Hewson)". But if every individual pirate one day twigs that someone has to start the barrel rolling and stop killing the industry, then pirating will no longer plague the software world. (Yuk! Did I write that over-sentimentalised lecture?)

At last, my chest is thinning out. Hold on what's that I see two inches above my right nipple? Is it worth mentioning? Oh alright then.

It's been said billions of times before by less sincere crawlers, but CU is brill. As I've mentioned before games don't mean a great deal to me any more. In fact CU is the only computer magazine I still buy. The reason why is because it has struck the happy medium between a boring magazine about computers (like Commodore Computing International) and overly diversified and equally boring magazines (such as C+VG). I can only pray that the balance is maintained because I do enjoy reading about developments in the industry as well as the reviewers' favourite snacks (where were the Twiglets?).

So that's it.

Rahul Joshi
Willesden,
London

Software sense

● I have something (remotely) intelligent to say to your readers.

OK you "Ace Pirates", get off your Pedestals and let down your inflatable heads. It isn't clever to pirate games, even an idiot could do it. Many obviously do. You say you copy games because they are so expensive. Well try this for size: Games are so expensive because you copy them. Yes, you. You copy the games instead of paying for them. Therefore, the companies have to put their prices up so that Honest Joe's dough will make up for Dirty Dick's nicks. So if you quit pirating, perhaps we'll all see lower priced software on our shelves. Thank you.

Mark Rendle,
Maldon,
Essex



PIRAC

PART ONE-PLAG

Clones, rip-offs, variants, derivatives — doesn't matter what you call 'em, they've been around for as long as the software industry itself. And while this kind of stealing (or 'borrowing', if you prefer) doesn't have quite the same air of criminality as yer dodgy software pirates selling their bootlegs out of car boots or on market stalls, plagiarism is, in a very real sense, piracy. It's taking somebody else's idea (or an idea for which they've paid good money); selling it; and making cash which the original creator/owner might otherwise have made. What's more, at least in this country, this kind of semi-respectable or at least acceptable, pilfering may well account for far more lost revenue for game creators and publishers than the more traditionally-defined pirates.

As Ocean Software's boss David Ward points out, "commercial piracy isn't a great problem in this country mainly because the retail structures can't be interfaced illegally — commercial piracy doesn't exist in the high street to any real extent."



Steal it

Plagiarism, on the other hand, is rife. There have been literally dozens of *Invaders* clones, *Pacman* clones, *Galaxian* clones, *Kong* clones, *Defender* clones. You name it, somebody's cloned it.

It's not difficult to see why cloning is so popular: it certainly makes commercial sense to take the core ideas from an existing arcade hit, with proven popularity, than to develop a piece of original software from scratch. An official 64 conversion may not appear for



many months, or years. Also, when developing a copycat-style game, you're under no legal obligation to stick rigidly to the original coin-op's features as there are no licence conditions to be met (there's no licence), so you can freely add to and enhance the original ideas. Which is why many clones are often actually superior games to the official conversions. Finally, of course, you don't have to pay a licence fee: the biggest coin-op companies can currently demand, and get, figures in excess of £100,000 for the conversion rights to their top products. No wonder the big licence-buying software houses — US Gold, Ocean/Imagine, Activision, and Firebird — get a bit peeved when near identical versions of licences they've forked out for appear in the shops, often well in advance of the official licence.

Of course, it isn't only arcade licences that get ripped off — any really hot originally-developed home computer software will spawn a host of copies. But — unless, as happened to one hapless programmer, you allow a mag to publish the graphics, scenario and other brilliant new features of your latest epic weeks before the official release date — the one great advantage of originally developed software is that the cloners can't usually rip you off until your game appears on sale, which means that you get a headstart on 'em. By the time the first *Nausearius* rip-off appears, you'll have made loadsamoney and will be lying on a beach in Barbados (at least, that's the theory).

Who's zooming who?

It certainly isn't difficult to find examples of well-known rip-offs. Activision's *Super Sprint* conversion was preceded by the rather similar *Grand Prix Simulator* from budget house Codemasters; so similar, in fact, that the clone was the subject of legal proceedings.

Threats of legal action, once again by Activision, resulted in CRL's *Wonder boy* rip-off *The Equaliser* being withdrawn from the shops soon after it went on sale.

Atari's classic arcade *Dungeons & Dragons*-style smash *Gauntlet* — officially licensed to US Gold — has been ripped off so many times that we've lost count but certainly Firebird's *Druid*, Activision's *Dandy* and Rainbow Arts' *Garrison* are towards the top of the list.

Further back in time Elite's Capcom conversion of *Commando* was scooped by Alligata's near identical *Who Dares Wins*, which led to a well-publicised flurry of legal papers.

And, on the home front, First Star's *Boulderdash* and Hewson's *Uridium* have both been prime 'sources of inspiration' for later, less innovative programmers.

We could go on, but you get the idea. So it's going on, lots of it. But how does the software industry feel about it. And, more to the point what can they do about it?

David Ward is philosophical about the existence of plagiarism: "It exists in all art forms, and I suppose the extent to which it proliferates in any particular area is directly proportional to the related industry's ability to police it." But, of course, "if one feels that one is losing sales through others plagiarising a design, it has to be a bad thing. Ultimately that's taking away the money for innovation, and if that's happening, eventually you get less innovation."

Activision's Rod Cousens has strong feelings about the harmful effects of plagiarism on the industry. Activision have been one of the software houses worst affected by rip-offs, and have found themselves resorting to legal action more often than most — but usually in vain. He feels that plagiarism has definitely cost the company sales, and cites the *Super Sprint/Grand Prix Simulator* dispute as an example: "the *Grand Prix Simulator* release destroyed *Super Sprint*. However you judge the respective merits of the two products, there is no doubt that it was particularly damaging to the sales of *Super Sprint*, a game which had been very popular in the arcades and would normally have been expected to sell very well on conversion."



Rod Cousens suffered more than most.

Help! Rape! Police!

"The trouble with plagiarism," Cousens adds, "is that it doesn't allow the business to develop — you can't develop the industry without Research and Development costs."

He finds the attitude of the budget houses towards plagiarism particularly galling: "It disappoints me a lot that budget houses are quite prepared to take the fruits of the major labels' developments and then slag the majors off for being overpriced. That seems to me to smack of hypocricy."

Silverbird's Colin Fuidge doesn't agree: "People never really lose sales. Joe Public's probably still going to pick up the official licence anyway."

Besides, in Fuidge's opinion, "nothing's new; not really. Full price software houses usually sign up commercial product which is a known seller. It's quite obvious that

CY THE SOFTWARE STING

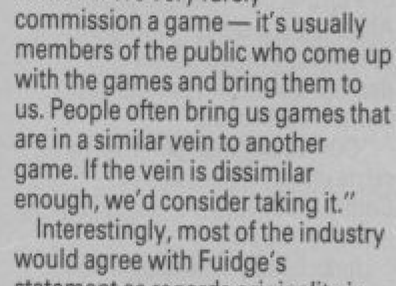
GIARISM



if a programmer produces a game that's good and people want more of it, we'll be catering for that demand. We very rarely commission a game — it's usually members of the public who come up with the games and bring them to us. People often bring us games that are in a similar vein to another game. If the vein is dissimilar enough, we'd consider taking it."

Interestingly, most of the industry would agree with Fuidge's statement as regards originality in games, at least to some extent.

US Gold's Tim Chaney admits that "there are very few original concepts in the market place. Anybody who takes a puritanical view about plagiarism is being slightly hypocritical. There are really only about half-a-dozen truly original ideas, games like *Pacman, Space Invaders* and so on, the early Atari products which came out in the late '70s. I mean, *Gauntlet* is more or less a *Pacman* clone — you're in a maze and you're being followed, the difference in *Gauntlet* being you can fight back. The real question is what is original and what isn't."



"It can be very complex," says Audiogenic's Peter Calver. "Take *Arkanoid*. We, amongst other companies, produced a game of a similar nature, *Impact*. We subsequently had threats made to us in relation to that game from Taito. But we understand that what has now transpired is that Atari, who own the rights to *BreakOut*, have taken the view that *Arkanoid* infringes their copyright in *BreakOut*, and I believe proceedings have now been issued."

The question at the core of plagiarism disputes does, therefore, seem to be not whether or not somebody has copied *Pacman* in their game, but, as David Ward put it, "how closely do you have to copy *Pacman* for inspiration to become plagiarism?"

And, as several industry figures will ruefully tell you, this is a tough question to answer.

Look and feel

The law with regards to the ripping off of computer games in this country is still in a fairly undeveloped state. It has long been accepted that those who can be proven to have pinched lines of somebody else's source code are liable for breach of copyright. (This applies even when the code taken is a relatively minor part of the whole program. A court recently decided a progammer who nicked 30 lines of code out of a total of 15,000 lines in a program had infringed the owner's copyright in the program).

However, if you want to try to prevent someone from bringing out a game *concept* similar to yours, you're in much trickier territory. In America a doctrine known as Look And Feel (originally laid down in a case which concerned the similarities between a character in a TV programme 'HR Puffinstuff' and Mayor McCheese from 'McDonaldland'!) means that you can get a court decision in your favour if you prove that somebody else's game substantially reproduces the look and feel of yours. Over here, unless the similarities are overwhelming, you're unlikely to succeed.

Mind you, comparitively few cases get to court in the first place, due, according to System 3's Mark Cale, to the co-operative atmosphere amongst British software houses: "America's a big ruthless commercial market. If somebody can put you out of business by whatever means, they will. Over here we all tend to work together.' Hence, many disputes are solved here over the phone; a case of 'jaw-jaw' rather than 'war-war'.

Nevertheless, with the price of licences rocketing, and so many smaller companies getting pushed out of the market, chances are that more companies are going to be talking to their lawyers when they see a rival's product which seems a bit too close to theirs for comfort.

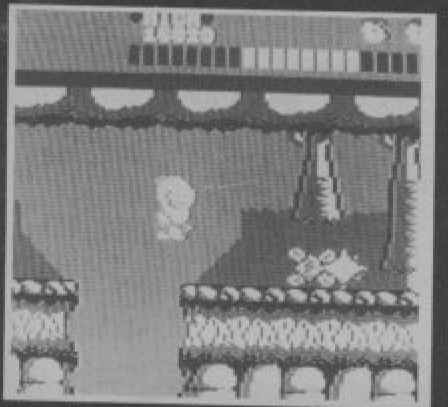
Get some protection

One company who'd like to see the Look And Feel rule in operation here is Activision. While they have had some successful forays into the courts (notably when they managed to prove in court that their copyright in *Pitfall* had been infringed by Microdeal's *Cuthbert In The Jungle*) their experience in the *Super Sprint/ Grand Prix Simulator* case was far less happy: "the hearing was before an elderly judge, not familiar with computer games, and he basically said 'you can't copyright a driving track'. He didn't pay any attention to the fact that they'd also copied spanners, oil, car colours, and the car spinning feature, so we weren't successful. If we'd fought the case in America we'd unquestionably have won."

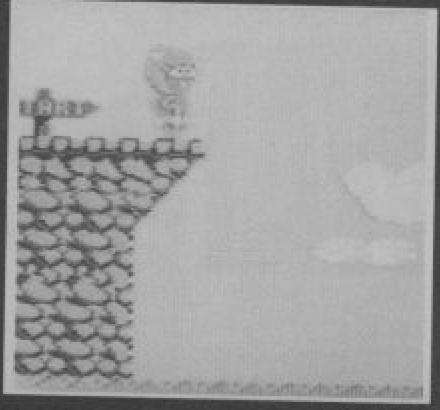
Tim Chaney is even more forthright: "our protection, legally, when we buy an arcade licence is



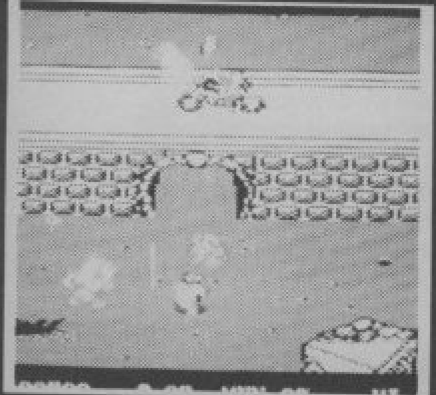
The Power House's very own boy wonder: The Equaliser.



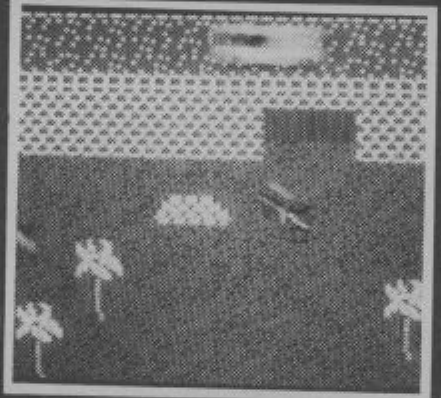
Activision's Wonderboy — no equals.



Elite's officially licensed conversion of Commando.



Alligata's unofficial tribute: Who Dares Wins.



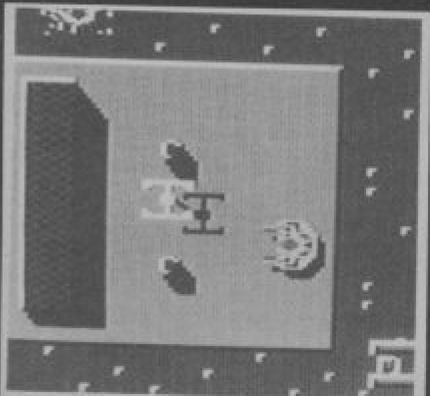
Some are more equal than others: System's 3's International Karate.



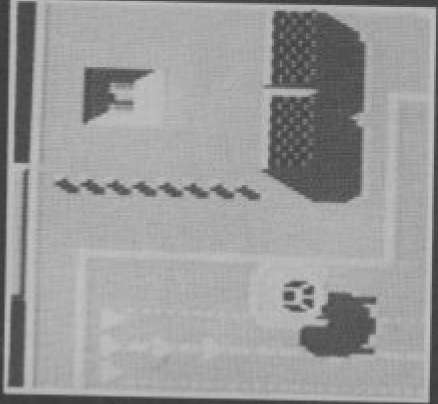
"Karate is karate . . ." And this is Data East's Karate Champ.



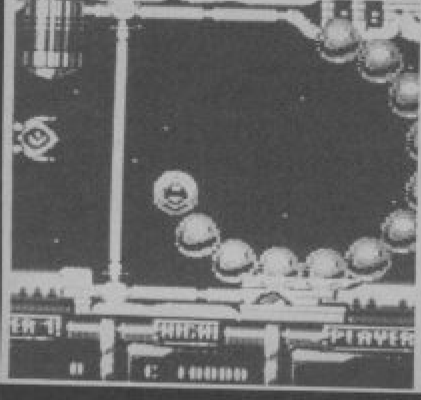
Sarcastria — Psycastria from Audiogenic.



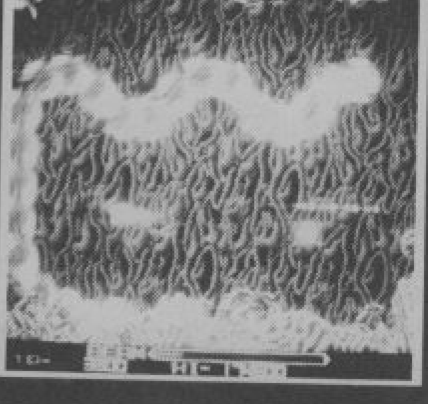
A prime source of inspiration: Andrew Braybrook's Uridium.



Firebird's IO — "Everyone out there knows it's a clone of R-Type."



Irem's R-Type, signed up by Activision for a reputed six-figure sum.



negligible." Their *Gauntlet* experience gives an interesting insight into the way software houses in this country see plagiarism. Of the three products mentioned which seemed to contravene US Gold's conversion rights, they only contemplated taking legal action against one, *Druid* (their lawyers advised them ultimately, that under existing law success couldn't be certain, so the matter ended there). Due to some undisclosed situation between US Gold and Activision, the latter's *Dandy* was not pursued.

And as for Rainbow Arts' *Garrison*, Chaney says that a combination of the fact that US Gold represent RA in this country, and that there wasn't an Amiga *Gauntlet* meant that no action was taken against *Garrison* either. "We took the view that it was so close — and so good — that it probably filled a gap in the market on the Amiga."

In the absence of a legal answer, Tim Chaney feels that it's often possible to use other means, such as contacting retailers and distributors in relation to an obvious clone, or even approaching the original arcade company and suggesting that, in view of their behaviour, the company in question should be denied coin-op conversion licences in the future.



Up before the beak

There may soon, however, be some more law on the matter. The recent release, by Firebird, of a game called *IO*, looks like it may well result in a major court battle. The game bears a resemblance to the brilliant, horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up, *R-Type*, a hit in the arcades for Irem and whose conversion rights were signed up by Activision for a reputed six-figure sum. Given that Activision, in particular, have suffered from the absence of the Look And Feel rule in this country's law, and taking into consideration the huge sum paid out for the licence, it seems as good a time as any for a case to be taken by them, with all the expensive trappings of expert witnesses, to try and establish such a concept in a court action. Certainly, Activision's Rod Cousens feels strongly about the issue: "Everyone out there knows *Io*'s a clone of *R-Type*. I feel particularly disappointed that Firebird should have released this game, because they're also in the business of acquiring arcade licences. We're not interested in competing with anybody by copying their products, and we feel particularly aggrieved that they feel able to resort to such actions. Obviously, in the best interests of our company, we'll be trying to minimise our exposure, but I would not see us as willing to stand down on this one very easily."

As Cousens himself puts it, the outcome of this dispute will be "very interesting".

But, leaving pride and principles aside, is there any point, financially speaking, in taking a court action to attempt to remove a rip-off from the shop shelves? Do clones actually cost the original licensees/developers anything?

Elite's Steve Wilcox feels from personal experience that they do. Having gone through a court case with Alligata, gained an injunction against *Who Dares Wins* on the grounds that it infringed their rights in their product *Commando*, and then being faced with the prospect of a further court case to injunct Alligata's subsequent modification of the first banned game, Elite decided it was best to drop any further legal action.

"Our feeling was that it did have some effect on the sales of *Commando*, but I'd find it difficult to quantify this effect."

Undoubtedly Activision's Rod Cousens would go along with this view.

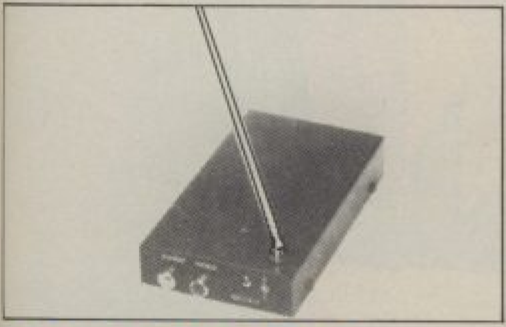
Electronic Arts' Mark Lewis, however, disagrees. When Melbourne House brought out *Gyroscope* before EA's conversion of Atari's *Marble Madness*, the only action that they took was "to go and tell our progammers to hurry up with our conversion". Lewis doesn't feel that the presence in the marketplace of the Melbourne House game had any adverse effect on their sales. "I don't think it did us any commercial harm whatsoever. I think people were waiting for a conversion of the arcade game. They were waiting for *Marble Madness*. In some ways the appearance of *Gyroscope* may actually have helped us, in that it resulted in people hearing about *Marble Madness*."



This feeling is echoed by both US Gold's Tim Chaney, and by System 3's Mark Cale. As Chaney puts it: "When you're advertising you assume that people know the game, so you're marketing the name. That's really your only protection — the fact that you have the exclusive rights over the name." Cale similarly notes: "if a game's got *Out Run*, say, on the package, people will go out and buy it, it's guaranteed."

But in the absence of any comprehensive research on the

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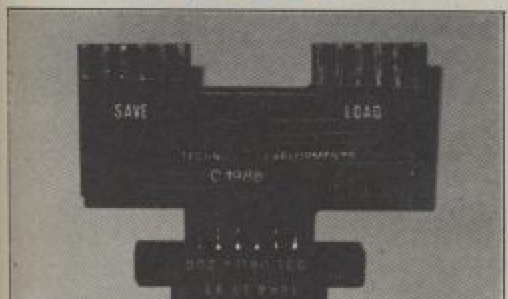
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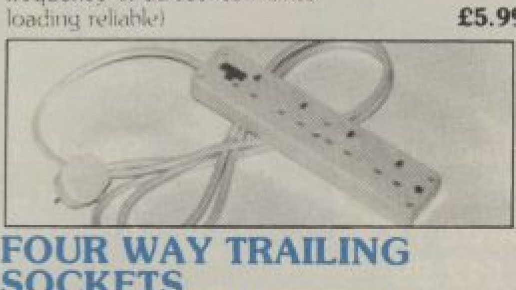
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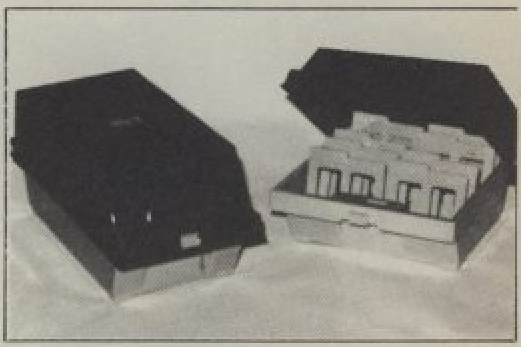
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PIRACY

effects of cloning, adverse or otherwise, it is at present, as Silverbird's Colin Fuidge notes, "perhaps absolutely impossible to say" whether the rip-offs take money out of the pockets of the licence holders and game originators.

Loadsaclones

So just how serious a problem is this cloning/plagiarism/rip-off business?

As regards the home market, a top original programmer like Graftgold's Andrew Braybrook feels that "it floods the market with a certain type of game, and destroys the need for it because there are already so many games like that out there". This means that, in his opinion, there's "a detrimental effect on the original — if I wanted to do *Uridium II* I think I'd have great difficulty because there's been so many copies of the original *Uridium*."



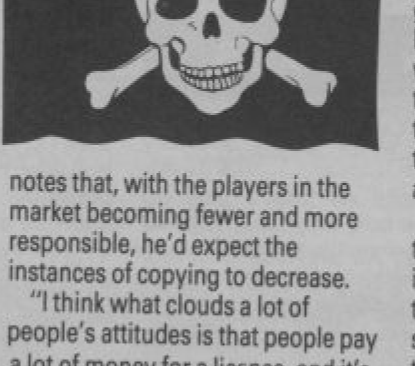
"Gauntlet ***is more or less a*** **Pacman** ***clone," says US Gold's Tim Chaney.***

Against this, Braybrook also admits that the presence of so many copiers out there actually spurs him on: "With *Morpheus* I went all out to really pack it into the machine. It makes copying it a lot more difficult. My reaction to being copied is that I become even more determined to make things as good as I can, so that even if people try and copy me, they might actually decide to give up."

Even more telling was the opinion of Audiogenic's Peter Calver, whose company released one of the best known *Uridium* clones, *Psycastria*: "I think in this particular case, *Psycastria* was closer than it need have been, with the result that when it came out it was out of date and didn't add anything. People just won't buy cheap imitations. There are commercial forces which mean that just doing a copy is a pointless exercise — nobody wants yesterday's papers."

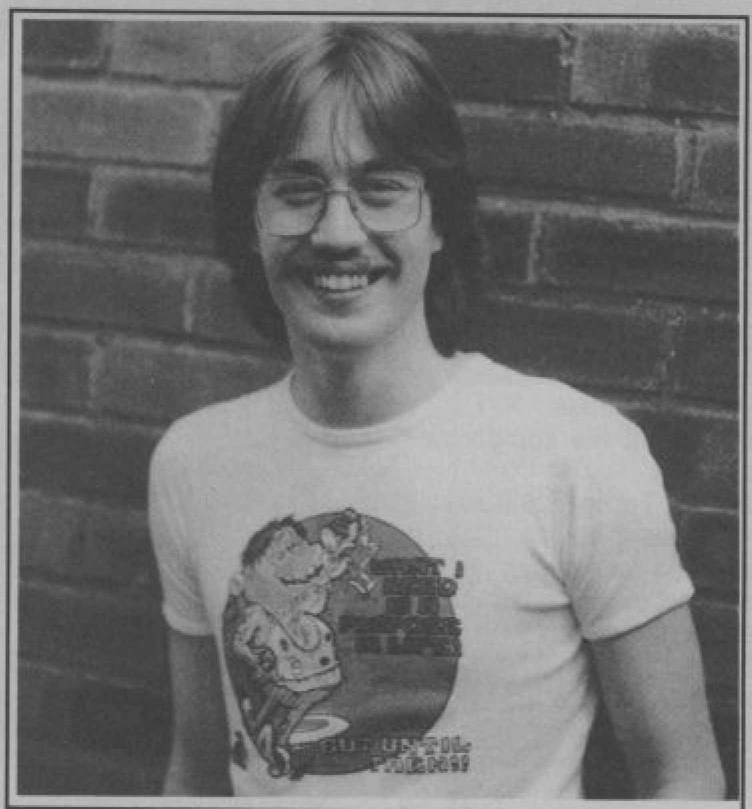
Obviously, though, it's in the big bucks licensing market that plagiarism is potentially more damaging.

"Licences generally do have a value," says Steve Wilcox, "and we are certainly still interested in acquiring them. But our experience in the *Commando* case was a salutary one. I think without a doubt that the possibility of being copied would now be a factor we'd look at when considering whether or not to acquire a particular licence." He also notes that, with the players in the market becoming fewer and more responsible, he'd expect the instances of copying to decrease.



"I think what clouds a lot of people's attitudes is that people pay a lot of money for a licence, and it's not usually worth it," says Audiogenic's Peter Calver. "Very few games are that original."

This view is one that Colin Fuidge would go along with: "I think people make a mistake by paying out so much for arcade licences — perhaps they should try to originate themselves more."



Andrew Braybook: "There's been so many copies of the original **Uridium."**

Everyone hates flares

Having seen his company's product, *International Karate*, taken off the market in the States by Data East who successfully alleged that it infringed their rights in their *Karate Champ*, system 3's Mark Cale is sceptical about the way in which the Look And Feel law operates in practice across the pond: "karate is karate. In this case our game had different moves, the men were different, the backgrounds were different. Our product was a better product and it was unique — there shouldn't have been a problem. But basically Data East and our distributors Epyx don't like each other, so this was their way of getting at each other. This Look And Feel rule is very dangerous. It wouldn't be needed over here. At the end of the day, I'd always talk to the other software houses here if there was a problem. I'd never rip off anybody totally."

He also notes, like Peter Calver, that the reality is that, like the music industry, the software industry goes through fashions, and that the software producers have to work in the area that's currently popular: "if there's an 'in' game, we'll be doing it too. It's like fashion: you're not going to produce flares when everybody else is wearing drainpipes."

Whatever anybody feels on the issues, one way or the other, there's no doubt that cloning seems to be as prevalent as ever. Tim Chaney says that "we get presented with knock-offs at least twice or three times a week. And I can only imagine, as I'm turning down these games, that they're going to crop up elsewhere. I mean, I've already seen a game where the aircraft flips over on its back while it's flying along, explodes as it hits the ground, and it moves really fast. I'd imagine we will see an *Afterburner* rip-off soon."

Ultimately, while Electronic Arts' Mark Lewis feels that plagiarism probably does have some negative effects on the industry, there's not too much to be done about it, and, in the end it's not as serious as other forms of piracy.

"I think there are two very different types of piracy. The commercial pirates, the guys who run off copies of original programs and sell them on the side of the road, they deny the copyright owner his basic rights, they're in every sense criminals, and they'll put companies out of business. People who make clone-like games are much less harmful. They may be copying an idea that's already there, but they're having to re-invent the technology, to put it into their own code. It's too bad that everybody doesn't go out and create great original artistic works. But you're always going to get that. I mean, how many pictures of Big Ben do you see when you're walking along Green Park? They're obviously not original, but they are artistic and they execute their ideas artistically."

Next Month: CU talks to the hackers and demo crews around Europe and asks: Is the 16-bit market under threat?

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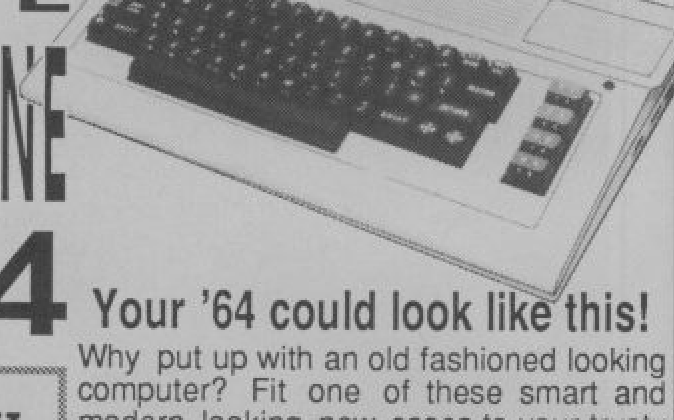
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PREDATOR COMPO
In our February issue we offered you the chance to win a super-dooper Nikon F-301 dual programme 35mm camera plus an amazingly complicated sounding 28-200 F3.5-5.3 "superzoom" lens.
The correct answers differed obviously for the first question but the majority said Commando and Raw Deal. *In camera* means private and SLR stands for Single Lens Reflex. And the winner is: Andrew Barnes, Sydenham, Belfast.

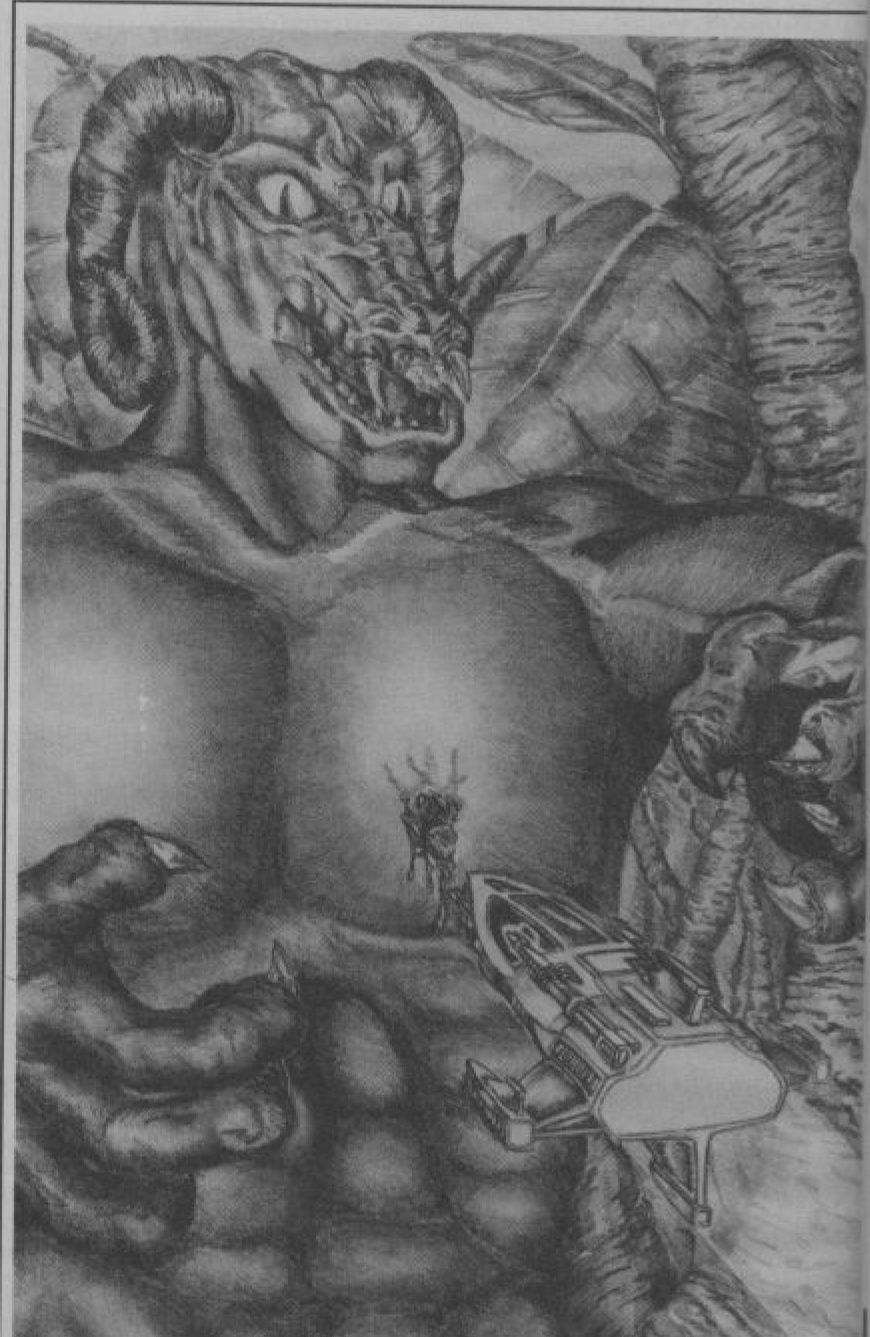
PLATOON COMPO
Five copies of the *Platoon* video were up for grabs in our February issue, courtesy of Ocean. All you had to do was tell us in which other Vietnam film Charlie Sheen's father starred, and then be lucky enough to get pulled out of Nick O'Kelly's oversized hat. The answer is of course Apocalypse Now, and these are the names of the lucky, lucky winners . . . Alex Newman, London N6, Karl Byfield, Collyhurst, Manchester, Mark Allison, Ormskirk, Lancs, Chris Fraser, West Kensington, London, Terence Baker, Rothwell, Leeds.

QUARTERBACK COMPO
Mastertronic threw us a gee-enuine leather American football to dispose of as we saw fit, and so we decided to offer it as a compo prize in the March issue. And so it came to pass that a quirky *Quarterback* question was set and answers were received and judgement was passed and a winner was drawn from the bag. John Dack of Norwich in Norfolk is now the proud owner of one odd shaped ball to do with as he see fit. The answer? Doug Williams. There, wasn't that simple?

BLOODY COMPO
Not a complaint, but a competition for Infogrames' *Captain Blood*, in which five copies of the game were on offer, along with five Jean Michael Jarre Zoolook albums. We wanted to known when the Spring Equinox began, and as most of you were quick to point out, it starts on March 20th. Here's the names of the first five out of le 'at. . . Stephen Crabtree, Bradford, West Yorkshire; Gideon Sanitt, Totteridge, London N20; Michael Sharpe, Peterborough, Cambs; Richard Walker, Sedgley, Dudley; Stuart Harrison, Dibden Purlieu, Southampton.

WHO DAT DAN DARE?
And who dat up dere? The following five lucky devils each win a copy of the brand new Deluxe Collector's Edition of Dan Dare: Pilot Of The Future, plus a Dan Dare T-Shirt, a poster-pack, and a copy of the game *Dan Dare II*. All thanks to Virgin. The answer, for posterity, is that the Eagle comic cost 3d when it first hit the streets on the 14th of April 1950. Matthew Trickett, Dronfield Woodhouse, Sheffield; Richard Pargeter, Styvechale Grange, Coventry; James McGrory, Sth Oxhey, Herts; Robert Jones, Swansea, West Glam; Mark Balchin, Cheltenham, Glos.

VILE ALIENS
Frankly, the vilest image we'll take out of this compo was the strained purple face of our local postie as he hefted yet another sackload of entries up the steps. You all done well, people, so well that it was really tough to pick just one entry. But one, eventually, we had to pick, so congratulations to the mysterious M. (Monet? Michaelangelo?) Roberts of Lincoln whose vile alien carries away the 14" remote control colour TV, and "close, you didn't win, but here's a copy of *Io*" to the following twenty runners-up: Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan, Matthew Biggs, Loosley Hill, Aylesbury, Matthew Colman, East Beach, Selsey, Derek Ettimdge, Dagenham, Essex, Sean Welsh, Wlaker, Newcastle On Tyne, Lee Morris, Stamford, Lincs, Andrew Whitley, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, Richard Weatherstone, Halfway, Sheffield, Matthew Davies, Eaton, Norwich, Carl Guest, Crabbs Cross, Ridditch, John Barker, Mansfield Woodhouse, Mansfield, Craig Thomson, Peebles, Tweedale, Scotland. Mr John Gower, Newhaven, East Sussex, Rupert Gladstone, Tower House Lane, Bristol, Hayden Pyle, Albion Place, Oxford, Peter Mullen, Hayes, Middx, LlcpL Carl Edwards, TQM Dept HW CoY, 1st BN Royal Regiment of Wales, Jason Rattue, Chelston, Torquay, Devon, Martin McKinney, Southbourne, Bournemouth.



INTO THE VALLEY

by Keith Campbell

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Needless to say, you are Doctor Watson, and your first task is to snap your old friend out of his depression, for only then will the visitor be able to convey his message, and the game proper to commence. The Crown Jewels have been stolen, and Holmes is charged with the task of finding and returning them by Monday — Coronation Day.

The thief, suspecting that Holmes will be called in to solve the case, has left a note at the scene of the crime, containing cryptic verses that lead to a trail for Holmes to follow. Holmes deduces that he must know the way the great detective's mind works, and has laid a trap. To fool him, another mind is needed to follow the trail — and so to avoid playing into the criminal's hands, it is you who will conduct the investigation. Sherlock will accompany you, and be on hand to offer help and advice should you need it.

What follows is a quest to find and recover all the jewels, which have been cunningly hidden around London, and to apprehend the thief. Finding the gems is one thing — actually getting your hands on them can be another problem altogether!

Here is a tourists guide to London. Along the way you will visit many of its historic sights. Westminster Abbey, for example, is there in great detail, and you can view many of the tombs of famous people buried there. Much of the text is irrelevant to the mystery itself, but is interesting enough in its own right. Did you know, for example, that a 'growler' was a four wheeled horse drawn cab? And that a hansom was a lighter vehicle, with only two wheels? I didn't, but it proved worthwhile to consult dictionary and encyclopaedia on a number of occasions — if only to check up on the American account of things! But were there really crowds of tourists in London in the 1880's?

Sherlock has its links with past Infocom games. The Nanny's are out in force in Kensington Gardens, and a pair of cotton balls prove really useful in getting one of the gems!

Like *Nord And Bert*, and *Border Zone, Sherlock* has built-in Invisiclues. Since the adventure is not separated into chapters, there are two menu levels of clues, to make access manageable. The first classifies them by place, and each place yeilds its own list of clues.

A criticism I made about *Border Zone* was that the clue lists themselves gave clues to the game. Whilst that is still true of Sherlock, it has been mitigated slightly by the inclusion of a number of red-herring clues in the list. For example, at 221b I was intrigued by the reference on how to enter the kitchen — a room I could not seem to find. The first of the sequence of hints suggested I should look no further unless I had managed to open the trapdoor in the hall. I searched for ages — but in fact there is no trapdoor, nor a kitchen! So if you use the clues — beware! Personally, I still don't like them.

As in *Border Zone*, the 64 version that I played comes on a double-sided disk. This does not interfere with play, for once the disk has been inverted during the initial loading of the game, it stays that way until a restart is required. What did interfere with the game's enjoyment on the 64, was the dreadfully sluggish responses, and the interminable grinding away of the drive while the computer chewed up my input and struggled with the disk to get hold of its output. But that's the 64 for you. At least you can run the game on it — unlike some other popular machines I could mention. Responses on the Amiga will, of course, be virtually instantaneous.

Infocom's *Sherlock* is infinitely better than that bug-ridden attempt by Melbourne House some years ago. It is not played in real time, but the day and time is displayed on the screen, only ticking away at each move you make. But remember — you do have a deadline to retrieve the jewels!

Altogether, this is a mystery that conveys just about the right atmosphere for the place, time, and subject, with a good helping of general historical interest thrown in as well. I take my hat off to it. Now that's something I could recommend you to do before you get very far into the game, too!

INTO THE VALLEY

Graphics . . . N/A
Puzzleability . . 9
Playability . . 7 (64)
. . 9 (AMIGA)
Value . . . 9

INTO THE VALLEY

BEYOND ZORK

Activision/ Infocom 128/Amiga Price: £24.99

Role playing comes to Infocom games in *Beyond Zork*, in which you must set up a new character or retrieve an existing one before you can start. Characters are endowed with varying degrees of strength, endurance, intelligence, compassion and a few other things, and the mix of these is up to the player. One of the problems that I have with the game is that I cannot be sure whether my lack of progress is due to my own faulty strategy and problem solving, or whether I have simply chosen the wrong combination of attributes for my character.

Quite frequently in the game, the player is attacked by one of *Beyond Zork's* many monsters, and although some are not so difficult to defeat, one or two seem well nigh impregnable and always kill me. There is an infinitely long bridge, too, but my current thoughts on that are that it takes an infinite number of moves to cross. Mind you, I could be wrong!

Now if someone could tell me whether it is merely the faults in my personality that are preventing me from enjoying the game further, or whether the problems and battles are capable of being solved and won given the right weapons and some bright ideas, irrespective of character, then at least I would know at which aspect to direct my efforts!

Apart from the high semi-random fatality rate in *Beyond Zork*, there are random elements in both the make-up of the map, and in the placing of certain objects and creatures each time the game is played. So I can't even start back in with a view to concentrating on one particular problem!

For problems there are, just as you would expect from storyteller Brian Moriarty, and somehow I found it difficult to savour them as in a 'normal' Infocom adventure — due to the fact that I had little faith that I would survive long enough to go trotting off elsewhere and return with what I considered to be the likely wherewithall to effect a solution.

The game is written in Interactive Fiction Plus, which means that it is not available on the 64; you will need a 128 or an Amiga to run this one.

There are a whole lot of new features and commands at your disposal. The most obvious is the screen format, and the fact that colour is used for the first time (assuming you use a colour monitor or TV). A window sits at the top left of the screen, which by default contains the location text. This 'appears' in the window, rather than scrolling within it, and it may be replaced by the inventory list or the current status of the player's character, if the appropriate command is used.

But the most obvious difference in the game is the provision of an on-screen map. This is a miniature block diagram, showing the disposition of nearby locations and the exits available. It updates as you move, and the section displayed changes at times when otherwise it would grow too large to extend. Rather cleverly, if a door must be opened before an exit is available, the exit will not be shown until it is. This is true even to the extent that if you go in a room and close the door behind you, the route linking the two rooms is removed, even though both rooms are displayed. This provides a swift reference to available exits — far quicker than wading through the detail of the text.

In conjunction with the map, there is a new command ZOOM, which toggles the display between a small area of a large scale map, and a larger area shown in miniature.

Another new command is NAME. This allows you to make up your own synonym for an oft-used object whose name is a bit of a fistful to type. For example, if you find the word LANTERN is getting tiresome, then a simple NAME LANTERN "LUX" will enable you to refer to it as such for the rest of the game, as in LIGHT LUX.

The quest is to find the Coconut Of Quendor, but so far, nothing I have seen has so much as hinted at its existence, never mind its whereabouts! I have with me one solitary Zorkmid, whilst everything of interest down at the Magicke Shoppe is around the 24z mark. The old woman in there may be a wealth of information about all things magic, but what use is that if I can't get hold of any of the stuff? And another complaint — she will tell me the use of all the scrolls that are lying about the place, but she won't tell me how to use them!

Well, what to do now? Think I'll take the gondola to the jungle, and try and rescue the baby Hungus from the quicksand. Bet the crocodile gets me first, though!

Beyond Zork is a clever combination of an Infocom text adventure with a D&D type role playing game. I am not sure that the combination works well. Nevertheless, the game is a must for all Infocom fans, (the name alone should ensure that) for it is better than a number of their titles, particularly some of the more recent ones.

Graphics ... 10
Puzzleability .. 8
Playability ..10
Value ... 9

ADVENTURE CLUES

JINXTER:
Call the clockmaker and then make him panic!

UNINVITED:
To open a box, ignite it and be grateful.

DRACULA:
Wear the crucifix to be allowed on the second coach.

WOLFMAN:
If you were to look at mirror, you would SEE something interesting.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE:
Carry the cord when you kill the Wyverns.

GUILD OF THIEVES:
Reflect on the wax problem.

KAYLETH:
Wear the coat to see in the shaft. The dime is in the citadel ruins.

FRANKENSTEIN:
Pray and speak in the church, and search the forge for a means to money.

KNIGHTMARE:
Give the old man food and water and ask him for help.

KOBYASHI NARU:
Use the solance underwater to get the pearl.

KENTILLA:
Get elva to shoot the Darg-vool with the arrow.

ADVENTURE CLUES

VALLEY RESCUE

Who can help Jenny Gallop? What should she give the pawnbroker in *Ring Of Power*? Jenny also wants to know what she will get in return, but I guess she will have to wait and see — assuming that some kind person can answer her first question! Not being the sort who is mean with her questions, Jenny also seeks the password to get into the palace.

"How do you get into the maze, in *Causes Of Chaos*?" asks Olav Lengeland, of Alusund in Norway, who describes himself as: ". . . one of your most loyal readers . . ." Well I never! Most people spend hours and hours trying to find their way OUT of mazes, not INTO them!

Here is another maze. "What is the solution to the zombies in the maze?" asks an anonymous *Uninvited* player. Still on mazes, some time ago I advised Patrik Grundstrom of Malmo in Sweden to go W,W,W,N,W,S,E, to find his way through the forest in Dracula. So he did — and where did he end up? In a gloomy forest. Gulp! Seems one of my database clues is a bit off the mark! Perhaps things might work out better if you went N,W,N,W,S,E, Patrik. (Fingers crossed!)

There's a game called *Maniac Mansion*, and Patrick Beenen and his friends are playing it somewhere in Posterholf, in the Netherlands. What they would like to know is how to get the gas for the chainsaw, how to open the wall safe, and what is the combination of the inner door.

"Is it possible to get past the sniper near the Fur Trading Centre?" asks Andrew Reston, one of the many currently playing *Rigel's Revenge*.

David May was having problems with *Kayleth* back in February, but not to worry — John Roberts of Stoke-on-Trent has now come to his rescue. "He is missing an AZAP code," suggests John. "Examine everything very carefully on leaving the spaceship full of droids." John adds that he would dearly love to buy or borrow a C-64 copy of *Zork 1*. I have it from the horse's mouth that you can mail-order ANY Infocom title direct from Activision. Why not take Rod cousens at his word, John, and do just that? Activision's address is: 23 Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW3 2PN.

Mark Tomordy has a festering wound which looks fatal, and can find no cure for it. He is masquerading as *Frankenstein* in the Nottingham area. (Nottingham? Sure you're in the right game, Mark?)

Has anyone come across honey in *Guild Of Thieves?* If so, how can you get it (can you get it, do you need it?) because at present, Keith Ellis of Weston-super-Mare is getting stung to death! Answers to this and any other of the problems mentioned, will be gratefully received at The Valley — and YOU can always write for help, too! Address your letters to me at *The Valley, Commodore User, Priory Court, 32-34 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.*

CAMPBELL'S COMMENT

What are our overseas readers saying this month? Here comes Olav with that Saturday morning feeling!

★ About a month ago on a lovely Saturday morning, I received your reply to a letter I wrote to you earlier. The same day I completed *Imagination*, and proceeded a great deal further in *Lords Of Time*, both thanks to your clues! Thank you very, very, very, very, VERY much!!!!!

Although your mag costs two quid here in Norway, I buy a copy each month. I enclose some tips — I really hope they will earn me an Amiga or something. If not, your last letter gave me something just as valuable — your autograph!

Olav Bjoernbakken,
Vang, Norway.

Campbell's comment: Take note Mister Pattenden! I shall be signing my copy each month in future!

And how did our overseas readers cope with the *Jinxter* review?

★ When I first read your review I said to myself "What is that, Chinese?" I had to use dictionaries, special dictionaries, and a book of English idioms. I searched the bookstores for a dictionary of slang, and my trips did not have satisfactory results.

Anyway, I have *Jinxter* (that bloody newspaper uses the same language!) and when I play it efficiently I'll report back to you.

But I think this game was written exclusively for the British people, not even for the Americans! For us who know English but it isn't our mother language, I think we're outsiders! Narmean, Keith? It's all Greek to me!

Kostas Pollizos,
Athens.

Campbell's comment: True, Kostas. But only us British peeps are cape of make cheese sandals with no flave!

What makes you buy a particular adventure? Ray Smith of Milton Keynes has a definite routine: "I get mine only after reading a review in one or more magazines. This gives me the opinions of at least two reviewers . . ." Eh? What? "They do not always agree . . ."

I should think not — something cannot ever agree with nothing! Ray continues: ". . . but it does give me a better chance of making the right choice. Your review of *Rigel's Revenge* was spot on." Ray goes on to say that his preference is for text adventures, as he finds loading in the graphics is a waste of time. "If you have an Amiga or ST, the memory is big enough to contain all the graphics so the response time is fast for each picture. But on a C64 the waiting takes some of the fun out of the game."

Campbell's comment: Ahem. I have some news for you, Ray. Graphics for games like *Guild Of Thieves* load in from disk as they are required. There is NOT enough memory in an ST or Amiga to contain all the detail — despite the heavy graphics compression used to fit them all in on one disk.

Finally, Ray makes his most important point: Try and persuade the owners of CU to enlarge the adventure section, as it is the only part worth reading."

Campbell's (final) Comment: There! Take that, Bohdan Buciak!

Just as I was building up a neat collection of Rainbird adventures, all lined up on a shelf in a bookcase, its future has been shattered! The smart boxes which are the hallmark of Rainbird, and which set the games off so nicely, are to be changed. No longer are they to be A5 size — in future they will be shorter, squatter, and fatter.

An integral part of the package are the extras that come with the games, and Rainbird argue that they will be able to fit more into the new 'Lawson' (richer, fatter) box. The fact that the scope for varying the contents will be more limited, is conveniently overlooked. *Jinxter's* folded Independent Guardian, for example, was just about as small as it could be for its purpose, in the old box. And it is not inconceivable that a map may one day demand inclusion with an adventure — the extra folds will reduce its readability.

To be fair, the new style box is not really of Rainbird's making. They are merely putting on a brave face having been virtually forced to give in to the adventure fan's most feared and dreaded person — the stores buyer. You know, that's the Mr or Ms responsible for not stocking a decent range of your favourite computer games, on the grounds that he or she knows better than you what you really want. It is Boots, apparently, who have decided they can no longer stock A5 boxes. The reason is quite simple: A5 boxes do not fit into their grand design for computer software display stands. A world without Boots own designer shelving would, of course, be unthinkable.

Infocom games are packaged in boxes slightly larger than Rainbird's present ones. (They fit nicely on the same shelf, enhancing my collection no end!) This makes Rainbird's decision the more surprising, for I thought that these days it was well-established ideology that we had to emulate the Americans in everything. Not in computer games boxes, it seems.

So don't ever expect to see an Infocom game in Boots — but then Boots have probably never heard of Infocom anyway.

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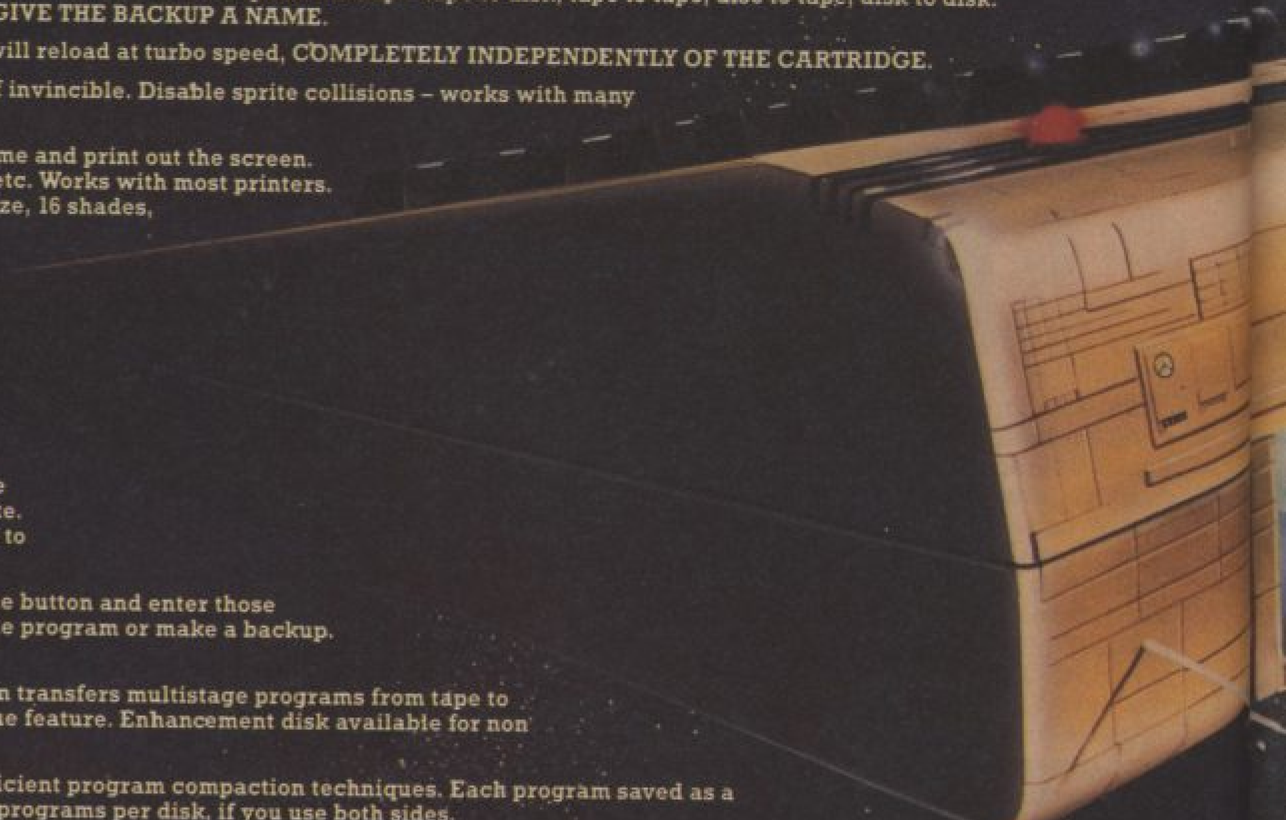
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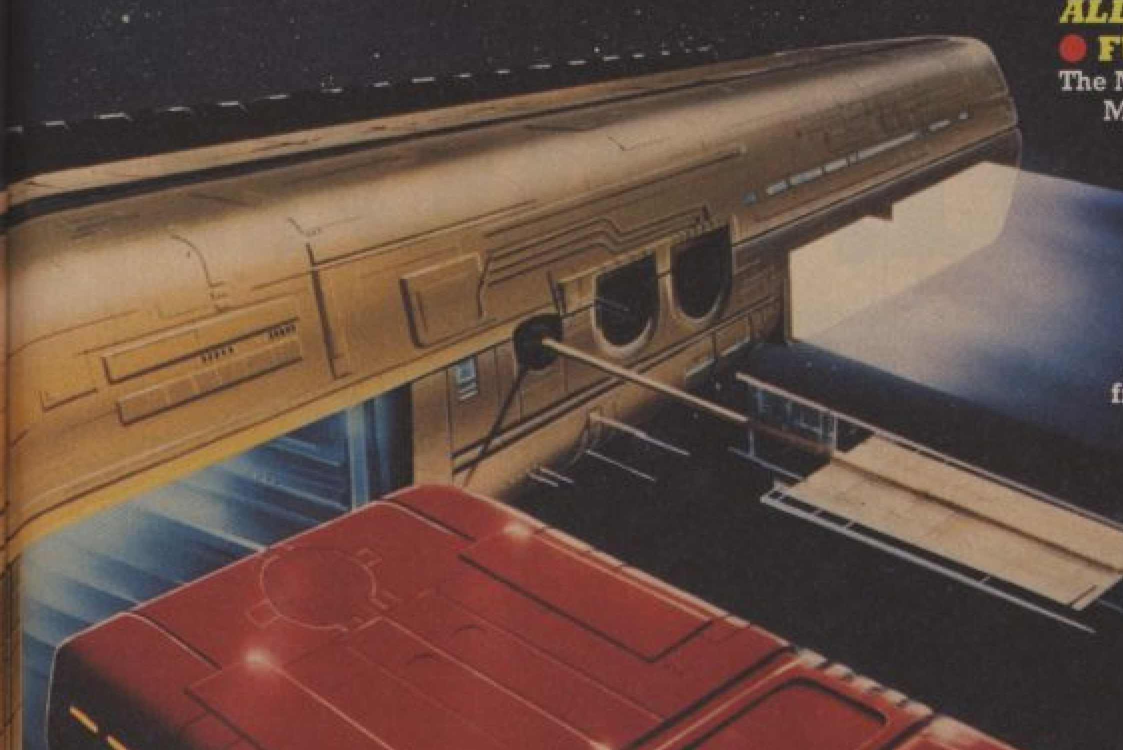
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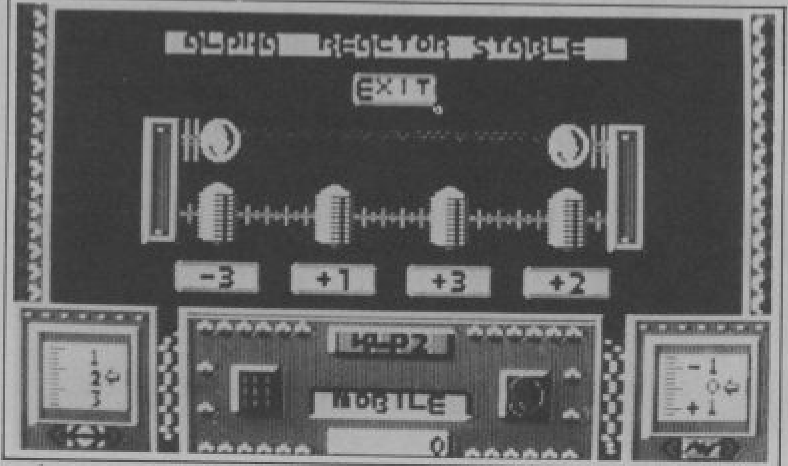
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Fer-yoo. Alpha Reactor is stable.

MAGNETRON

Well oil be blowed. Top tips for Graftgold's latest, courtesy of the man himself — Steve Turner. Author of such widely acclaimed classics as the Seiddab Trilogy, Avalon, Dragontorc and Quazatron — all on the (ahem) Spectrum. Ne'er mind. Magnetron's on the 64, and it's a corker. Read on . . .

The Beamdown

Probably the most dangerous part of the game is when KLP-2 beams to a new station, where there may be up to three droids waiting to grab him. Move off the Beam Point immediately so you can activate the grapple and destroy any robots crowding you. Always try to end up in a decent droid before beaming.

After beaming it's a good idea to grapple another droid as soon as possibile to bring the original KLP-2 over, so if you're blown up, you're not resurrected in the previous level. Build up a map of the beam connections by using terminals to find your location; when half of the levels are complete it's hard to find the remaining levels. I like to leave a few droids alive in case I need them later when crossing a completed level.

The Droids

In the early levels, destroying the droids will eliminate them. But later on, destroying them in one room leads to them being regenerated in another. So the best tactic is to take out menacing droids *en route* to a reactor, leaving droids that are not worrying you. Also you may need a certain type of droid for a specific situation. For instance, the G3 droids often block your route and cannot be grappled. The best way past this armoured guard is to be in a P1 that can ram its way through the G3.

For every Problem droid there is at least one droid that deals with it. Here are a few tips on the droids' specialities, although there are many more to find. The computer dta bank gives all the necessary information.

V4 — Has a decent weapon for a low level droid.
V2 — Can carry weights with more control.
P2 — Has the anti-freeze device to counter the anti-drive weapon.
P1 — Can ram almost anything.
G1 — Has laser shields.
E3 — Can jump off ledges without much damage. (It bounces).

A droid that is good at one thing is usually bad at another. Droids with better weapons and devices burn out quicker. Generally, the weaker droids last longer provided they don't get hit. There are a couple of droids to look out for that have Super Batteries that allow them to recover from hits.

The Weapons

Each weapon has its advantages and disadvantages. Match the weapon with the situation for the best effect.

CRUISER
A terrain-following weapon that can shoot around corners or up and down ramps. Gets confused as to which way to go in open spaces. But excellent on narrow, bendy ledges.

MORTAR
Very powerful but difficult to get the range right. This is useful for shooting droids on a higher ledge or up a ramp.

PLASMA BOLT
Fast, medium power weapon useful for destroying the nippy droids.

SEEKER
Can destroy most droids,but if you miss, get out of the way as this boomerang shaped missile homes in on KLP-2 even if he uses it.

BOUNCING BOMB
Powerful long range weapon that can bounce up or down ramps making it useful to fire right across the screen.

Grappling

If KLP-2 looks really fed up with you it's time to grapple to replenish your energy. Never play as KLP-2, he is too vulnerable.

If a room is really hard, have a quick look and then exit. Then go into grapple mode and charge into the room and head for a droid. They will be in the same position as when you left the screen. Sometimes in emergencies the Drop Grapple is needed. In grapple mode, hurl yourself off a ledge to land on a droid's head — best done in a Grapple Chassis as missing is fatal. This is a very useful tactic against droids with smart weapons. A direct route is essential to get to them in time. Sometimes you have to grapple everything you can along the way, just to stay alive.

For trigger-happy droids, jump them as they come round a corner or tackle them on a ramp. Note that the fewer the droids in a room the more they panic and fire their weapons.

The grapple game itself is easier if you are grappling a droid of lesser power. If you're KLP-2 it's risky grappling anything higher than a P1 droid. The risk grows with the difference in your chassis and the enemy's.

Always go for the Detonator Line first. Then head for any sphere icons on the top row as these are hardest to place. A useful tactic is to rotate four icons by constantly driving around in a square.

If you have two icons in a row, move the third icon next to it and drive around. After a few times round they shuffle into the correct places.

Another useful tactic is to see three connecting icons as a snake that can be made to move along by driving the cursor into its head and down its body. It's best not to think about it too much though — just drive the cursor around like mad and you'll soon get used to the different moves.

Reactors

To save time if a reactor is a long way away, shut it down and destroy your borrowed chassis by jumping off a ledge. If there are droids near a reactor and you have no rod to shut it down, keep removing a rod and destroying your chassis. Then grapple another droid and repeat the process. Go for the reactors as soon as you can or robots will regenerate. It is useful to map out the reactors and Beam Points on a four by four grid for each level. The computer data bank shows the location of each reactor.

Steve Turner



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ADVERTISMENT INDEX



PLATOON
(Ocean)

Fancy unlimited hits, and morale — but only for the first section? Type in this listing, having deposited a *Platoon* cassette in the C2N, the RUN it. Follow the on-screen prompts to load the game . . .

```
0 REM BY D. SLACK
10 FOR X=544 TO 619
20 READ B:POKE X, B:C=C+B:NEXT
30 IF C<>8748 THEN PRINT "ERROR": END
40 PRINT "INSERT TAPE":SYS 544
50 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 51
60 DATA 141, 196, 2, 169, 2, 141, 201, 2
70 DATA 76, 167, 2, 169, 74, 141, 111, 1
80 DATA 169, 2, 141, 112, 1, 169, 88, 141
90 DATA 211, 2, 169, 96, 141, 114, 226, 76
100 DATA 81, 3, 169, 81, 141, 196, 2, 169
110 DATA 3, 141, 201, 2, 169, 222, 141, 114
120 DATA 226, 169, 173, 141, 54, 189, 141
130 DATA 16, 189, 141, 211, 189, 169, 0
140 DATA 141, 114, 189, 76, 0, 4
```

NB: There won't be any music during the game — only a few sound effects.

FIREFLY
(Ocean)

Another userful listing from David Slack of Maidstone in Kent, this time for Special FX's second Screen Star. Enter the listing, then RUN it and follow the on-screen prompts to load *Firefly* with unlimited fuel and damage.

```
0 REM ★★ BY D. SLACK ★★
10 FOR X=390 TO 461
20 READ B:POKE X, B:C=C+B:NEXT
30 IF C<>7514 THEN PRINT "ERROR":END
40 PRINT "INSERT TAPE" SYS 390
50 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 153
60 DATA 141, 196, 2, 169, 1, 141, 201, 2
70 DATA 76, 167, 2, 169, 179, 141, 116, 1
80 DATA 169, 1, 141, 117, 1, 169, 88, 141
90 DATA 211, 2, 169, 96, 141, 69, 10, 141
100 DATA 93, 10, 76, 81, 3, 169, 192, 141
110 DATA 6, 147, 169, 1, 141, 7, 147, 76
120 DATA 0, 16, 173, 252, 72, 201, 214, 240
130 DATA 3, 32, 0, 21, 32, 156, 147, 96
```

NB: The music won't play as the game loads.

PSYCHO SOLDIER
(Imagine)

Oopsadaisy. There was a small error in the listing printed in the March issue. Line 7 should have read:

```
7 DATA 96, 72, 77, 80, 169, 165, 141, 8, 232, 76, 0, 130
```

RICOCHET
(Firebird)

One easy to enter and very useful cheat mode for this, ah, very *different BreakOut* variant coming up . . .

Now not a lot of people know this, but if you press SPACE to redefine the keys on the title screen and then redefine all keys to Q, you can enter the magic words . . . Just type GARGLUVSBIGBOTS (*does he really? — Ed*) — don't worry, nothing appears on screen. When the border flashes (oo-er) the cheat mode is active, so press the fire button to start the game and get down to some serious cheating . . .

What You Get . . .
● Unlimited Lives
● Level Advance Feature (Press **Commodore key**)
● Super Screen Designer (Accessed by pressing **CLR/HOME**)
Once In The Editor (No, not you, Mike) . . .
Use + and – to look at the screens (all 50 of 'em)
Keys **Q-I** select the block type
Keys **1-8** select colours
f1 allows you to position the Angry Yag
f7 deletes a screen
INST/DEL inserts a screen
N lets you give your screen a name (press RETURN to enter it)
M picks up a screen so you can move it (press the fire button to drop it)
Press the **Commodore** key to see the screen number (in hexidecimal) along with the screen's size and position in memory
CLR/HOME returns to the game — so you can play your new screens
← Puts the bat under computer control
Incidentally, without the cheat mode active, F7 warps you to the next level — at the cost of a life.

Blocks And Colours . . .
BLACK — Indestructable Block
GREEN — Greased Lightning
RED — Magno Bat
WHITE — Gism Gun
PURPLE — Violent Ball
YELLOW — Angry Yag

BLACK LAMP
(Firebird)

Tense, nervous headache? Try a dose of this listing from Tim and Ian Fraser of Ruislip in Middlesex. Type it in, RUN it then follow the on-screen prompts to load *Black Lamp* with a hardier Jack.

```
0 REM BLACK LAMP HACK BY TIM AND
IAN
10 FOR I=576 TO 624:READ
X:A=A+X::POKE I,X
11 NEXT
12 IF A<>4064 THEN PRINT "DATA
ERROR!":END
13 SYS 576
14 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 96, 141, 237, 2
15 DATA 32, 178, 2, 32, 81, 3, 169, 96
16 DATA 141, 63, 9, 32, 8, 169, 99
17 DATA 141, 113, 1, 169, 2, 141, 114, 1
18 DATA 32, 81, 3, 32, 81, 3, 32, 81, 3
19 DATA 169, 165, 141, 212, 19, 76, 97, 1
```

ZYBEX
(Zeppelin Games)

Have unlimited lines and/or unlimited fire-power — by typing in this listing, RUNing it and following the on-screen prompts to load the game . . .

```
0 REM ★★ BY D SLACK ★★
10 FOR X=366 TO 383
20 READ B:POKE X, B:C=C+B:NEXT
30 IF C<>5075 THEN PRINT "ERROR":END
40 PRINT:PRINT "DO YOU WANT
UNLIMITED LIVES Y/N"
50 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N" THEN
50
60 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 377, 189
70 PRINT:PRINT "DO YOU WANT
UNLIMITED FIRE POWER Y/N"
80 GET A$:IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N" THEN
80
90 IF A$="Y" THEN POKE 369, 181
100 PRINT:PRINT "INSERT TAPE": SYS 336
110 DATA 32, 44, 247, 32, 108, 245, 169, 99
120 DATA 141, 200, 2, 169, 1, 141, 201, 2
130 DATA 76, 167, 2, 169, 112, 141, 121, 4
140 DATA 169, 1, 141, 122, 4, 76, 0, 4, 169
150 DATA 214, 141, 19, 117, 141, 92, 117
160 DATA 169, 222, 141, 106, 113, 76, 0, 96
```

Thanks to David Slack of Maidstone in Kent for the above.

PLAY TO WIN

Samurai Warrior

How do we do it? Yes, even MORE exclusive tips, straight from the horse's mouth — well, the programmer's mouth. In this case it's the mouths of Beam Software, the team behind that super swish beat 'em up with a difference —* Samurai Warrior. *Take it away lads . . .

USAGI YOJIMBO

The hero of the game. His mood can be judged by the face icon in the top left corner. He is normally peaceful (calm face); in this mode he can interact with the various inhabitants of the game. Drawing his sword puts him into combat mode (angry face). When hit, he winces.

PEASANTS

Decidedly non-combatants, they can be found tending their fields or walking around. Drawing one's sword scares them away, while giving them money is a good (karmâ-adding) act. Peasants will bow to you when they get close; it is polite to bow first. Killing a peasant is a bad (karma-losing) thing.

NINJAS

Evil assassins in the service of Lord Hijiki, who ain to prevent Usagi from rescuing Lord Noriyuki. They can suddenly attack, often leaping from trees or from behind rocks. Their weapon reach is smaller than yours, but their blows are faster. Best tactics are to use the full blow on their way in, and then follow up quickly. Don't let then get in close for any length of time.

PRIESTS AND MONKS

Robed hermits and religious types seeking enlightenment. Monks refuse donations, while priests gladly accept themn. Always be polite to them — and don't draw a weapon on them; years of denial have made fierce warriors of them. Best combat tactics — don't fight them. Given that you have to, desperately parry until they've made an attack, then make a swift blow. Or run away.

RONIN

The standard warrior an ancient Nippon. If you're polite to them, they will leave you alone, if you have to fight them (or one of their sub-types, see below) stand and receive their charges, making sure you get the first blow. Then manoeuvre away and repeat this procedure.

The Ronin comes in several types:

- BASIC: walks around
- BOUNTY HUNTER: always hostile; calls out a challenge and then attacks
- TOLL COLLECTOR: village guard or lone bandit, the toll collector must be paid to be passed. Alternatively they can be fought
- DUELLIST: found in villages, these warriors challenge you for a duel to first blood. Whoever makes the first blow gains karma, and the duel ends.
- BOUNCER: found in Inns, to attack anyone disturbing the peace

GOBLINS

Immense, ferocious monsters found in mountains and forests. As a blow from their claws can kill a weakened Usagi, the best tactic is to dash in, strike and then back away — fast!

INNKEEPERS

Found (surprisingly) in Inns. Offering them money buys you a meal, which restores health. While being non-combatants, they keep a bodyguard or two handy to protect them.

DISGUISED NINJA

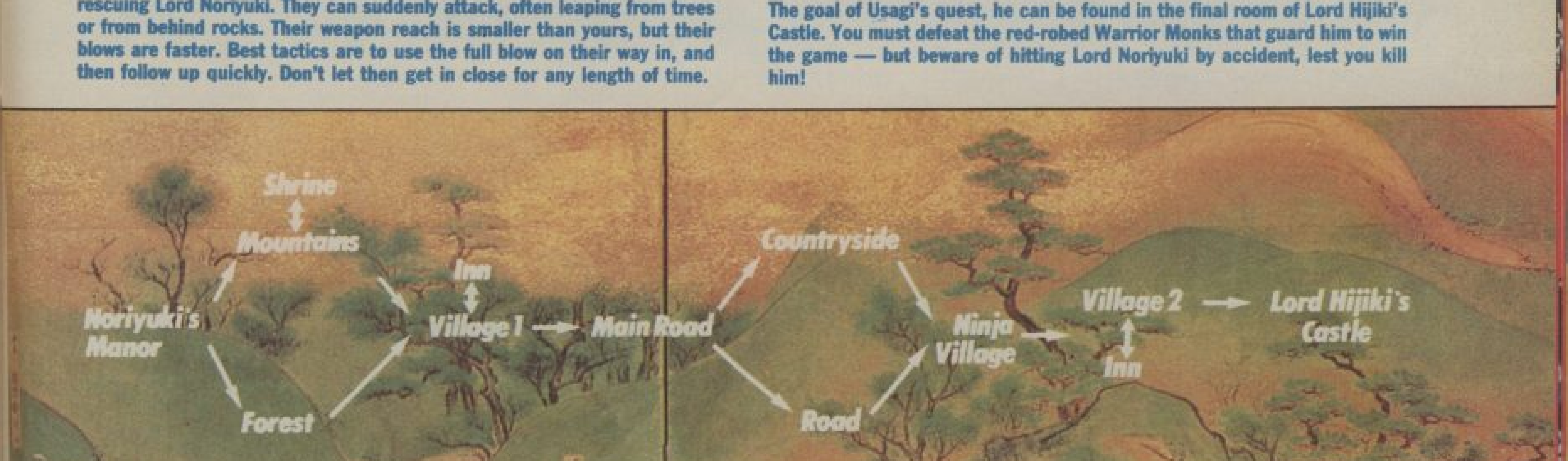
These can be found in several places, especially in the infamous Ninja Village. At first appearing to be innocent peasants, they will throw off their disguises upon being attacked, or if you turn your back on them.

NINJA MASTERS

Found in the Ninja Village and Lord Hijiki's castle, they have the power to appear and disappear at will, making them vicious opponents. Luck and fast reflexes are the only way to defeat them.

LORD NORIYUKI

The goal of Usagi's quest, he can be found in the final room of Lord Hijiki's Castle. You must defeat the red-robed Warrior Monks that guard him to win the game — but beware of hitting Lord Noriyuki by accident, lest you kill him!

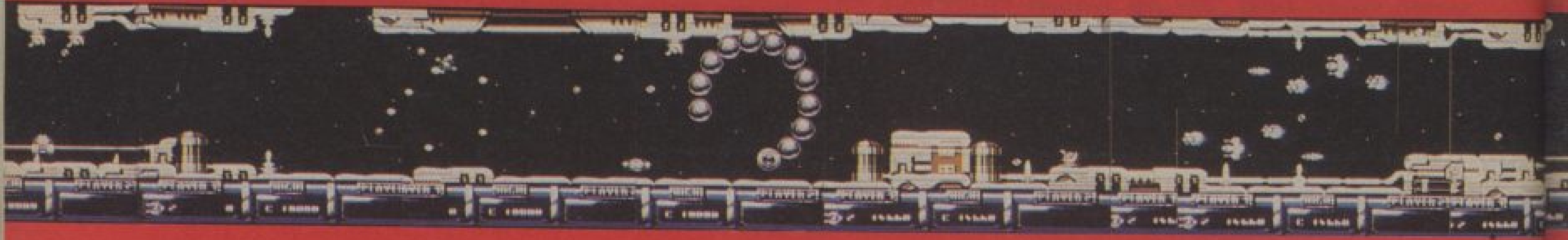


IO

IO has to be one of the most impressive shoot 'em ups ever released for the 64. It's also undoubtedly one of the most difficult to crack. So, being the kind, generous souls that we are, we asked IO's programmer Douglas Hare, to provide us with some handy hints. And if that wasn't enough, we've prepared this gorgeous four page map to help (or stick up on your wall if you feel so inclined). Simply stick the two sections together to form one lengthy level (they're a bit too big to print in one piece, see) and Bob's your graphics artist . . .



LEVEL ONE
The Orbs are the key to survival: not only do they provide extra fire power, they also act as a force field, protecting you from almost all collisions (snakes, lasers and scenery being the exceptions). You lose one orb but at least you're still alive.

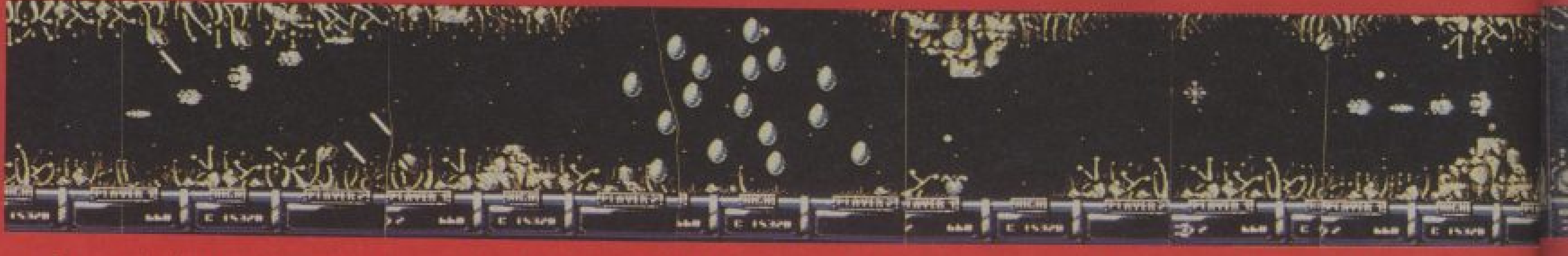


Horizontal movement concentrates the orbs' fire directly in front of your ship. Move to the extreme left-hand side of the screen, then hold the joystick left while moving vertically to keep the orbs up front. This tactic is essential for all end aliens. Note: chewing Wrigley's gum will not help you concentrate your firepower.



LEVEL TWO
Don't move in for the pick up too quickly otherwise a laser bolt from the plant could catch you out.

Here's the first seed-spewer. Ugly looking spud, isn't it. The pods throw their seeds in your general direction at varying heights. They are a nuisance, so get down low and let them inspect your missiles up close.



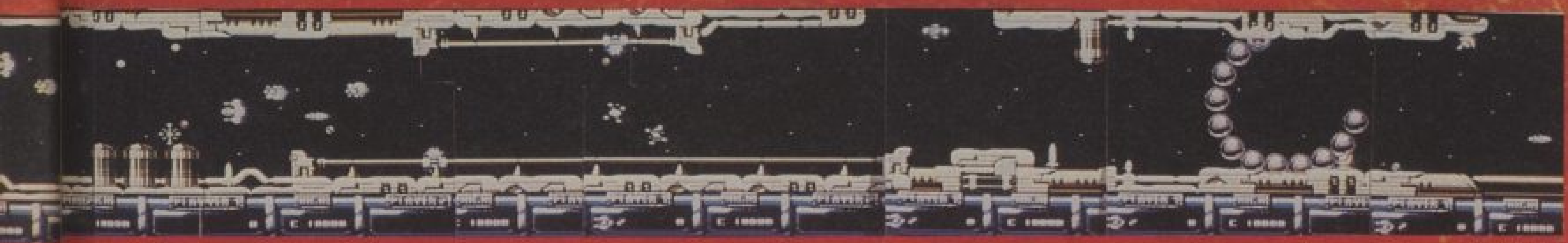
As you enter the row of laser-spitting plants, keep left and destroy the line of grey ships. Now hug the lower scenery to avoid fire.

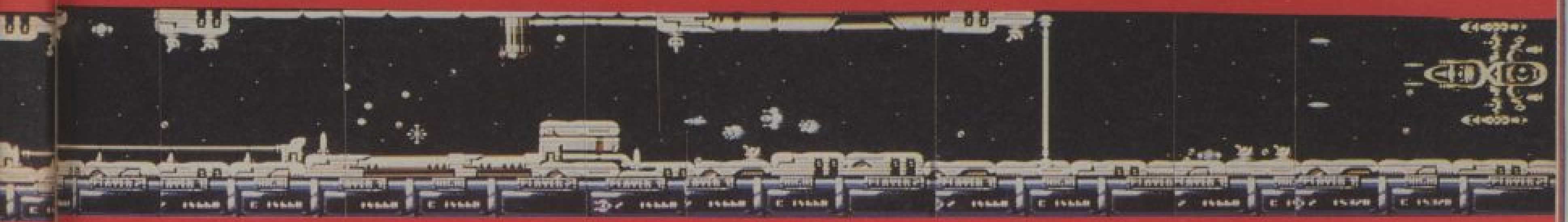
It's Easter again! Scramble the eggs with the smart bomb.

PLAY TO WIN



Highest score to date (no cheating): 308,700.





It doesn't matter which piece of this big 'un you destroy first, as long as you get rid of all of it. Go for whichever piece is convenient to shoot without getting shot.



Yuk. The first batch of grade A alien eggs. Stay to the left and try to take out as many as possible. Don't be tempted to move forward as chances are the snake will get you.



As you reach the skull, destroy at least one of the pods. Aim for the eye, avoiding its laser beams and flaming phlegm.





LEVEL THREE

Squadrons of grey fighter planes make their debut on this level. Be careful with them, as they constantly change their patterns, turning tail with little warning. Expect the unexpected.

The bubbles are a real navigational hazard, so burst them as soon as possible. Watch out for the indestructible gems they release when they burst.



Don't get caught out by the snake. Stay in the centre of the screen.



LEVEL FOUR

This is definitely the trickiest level! There are a number of sprites attached to the scenery which fly off at great speed in your direction when you get near their line of fire. And their intentions aren't entirely honourable. They represent a constant threat, so be alert.





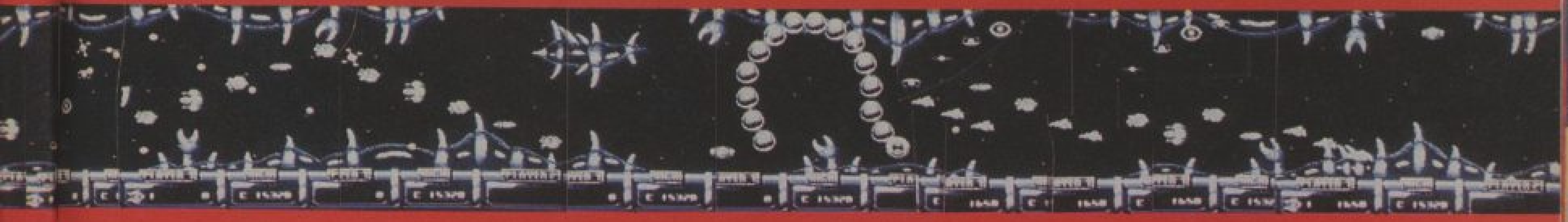


as
t.



f you have orbs as you near this laser gate, try to destroy the heavily rmoured beamers. If you can't get them, dodge and weave. Tricky, but not mpossible.

The generators above and below the cannon should be destroyed first. Go for the green generator and shoot it five times. It will now turn red meaning it will overload if hit again, so don't shoot it anymore. Any extra hits result in the cannon releasing deadly packets of energy. Move back and forth between the generators until they are both destroyed, then go for the dome on top of the cannon. Try to get used to the timing of the cannon firing.

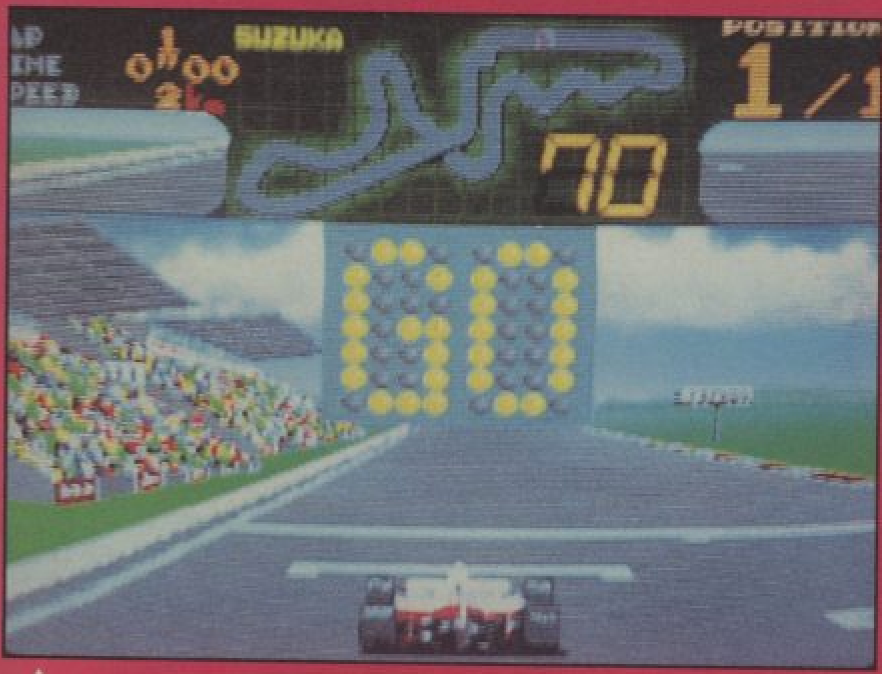




This circle of aliens materialises around your ship when you reach the foetus. The best plan is to destroy all of these before blowing away the grey gate. When the gate is destroyed the foetus will try to protect itself, so aim for the eye and — well, pray to win!

FINAL LAP

NAMCO (5 × 10p)



Pedal to the metal.



Know the enemy.



That's commercialisation for you.

Surveyed from a distance, Namco's *Final Lap* looks fairly impressive. Well, no, scrub that — it looks *very* impressive. You see, *Final Lap* represents yet another step up the coin-op evolutionary ladder. Namco boffins have come up with a system whereby two or more of these large *Pole Position*-style consoles can be linked together so that you can race against your mates. Although the machines are normally sold in pairs, it is possible to link together up to *eight* of the things in a long, space-consuming row.

Assuming you're racing in two-or-more player mode, you and all of your real live competitors' cars are displayed on each console's screen. Of course, being a formula one-style rubber-burner, there are also plenty of other computer-controlled cars cluttering up the course. You're racing against your mate(s), and all these other dudes too, but you're also racing against the clock.

The controls are standard for this kind of game: a steering wheel, an accelerator, a brake and a two-speed gear-stick. The course, which runs through blandly charming rural scenery, is well-endowed with bends. In fact, so well-endowed that there's practically no real "straight" to get up speed in comparative safety. The console doesn't fling you around á la *Out Run* or *Wec Le Mans* — given that the machines nestle snugly beside one another, it's difficult to see how it could — but the superstructure does quiver with a kind of "sensurround" effect, and the grungey screeching tyre noise that blasts out of the headset speakers helps compensate for the lack of hydraulics.

But what about that all-important playability factor?

Wellll . . . not so hot, I'm afraid. Not for the first time, a coin-op company would appear to have become so besotted with their fab 'n' brill new idea that they've neglected the bread-and-butter.

For a start, the action basically consists of putting the boot down and steering reasonably accurately. If you hit the verge, the usual result is a mere slowing of speed, and the cars merrily jostle and bump one another with no visible ill-

FINAL LAP



Coming up on the computer.



Watch that bend (geddit?).



effects (other than, perhaps, the occasional competitor being forced onto the grass). Now, such a resilient and philosophical reaction to collisions might be the norm among, say, stock cars or even, perhaps, buggies. But in a Formula One racing game contact with almost anything should mean destruction, conflagration or, at the very least, a good ten seconds of non-movement.

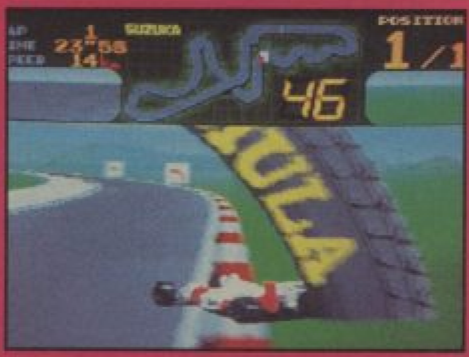
Nor do tactics come into your driving to any great extent — drive fast, on the road, and you'll qualify for the next level, drive slowly, or spend too long amongst the daisies, and you won't.

The scenery features distant forests, sponsored arches and even the occasional "blimp" (Zepellin-style balloon, to the uninitiated) but it's bland and repetitive. The soundtrack which plays through the screeching and revving is, I suspect, produced by some SAW-style outfit who either can't hear or don't care enough to produce anything of even passing interest.

Final Lap is, in short, dull. To be fair, it's rather less dull if played against a mate rather than just computer-controlled rivals — after all what's the fun in forcing somebody into the verge if you can't hear them cursing you — and perhaps if I played against seven mates, I'd have a really fab time. But I don't have seven mates and, more to the point, your local arcade is highly unlikely to have an eight-player *Final Lap*.

Nick Kelly.

Final lap? I hope so.



GRAPHICS:	5
SOUND:	5
TOUGHNESS:	4
ENDURANCE:	3
VALUE:	5
OVERALL:	5

ADES

KAGEKI

TAITO 2 × 10p

They'll be calling in the Mergers & Monopolies people if Taito keep this up: the quality beat 'em up market is fast becoming a one-horse race. Only Capcom's *Street Fighter* has made any serious challenge to the supremecy of *Renegade* and its even more brilliant sequel, *Double Dragon*. And, just when you thought it was safe to venture back onto the streets, they've done it again.

Kageki, however, takes a rather more light-hearted approach to fisticuffs and footwork than its predecessors. The setting is what looks like a vacant lot in one of Hong Kong's less salubrious zones, and your mission is to take on an entire biker gang, one by one, in single combat. Actually, there isn't a great deal of yer ackshual bike riding to be seen in the game, which isn't so surprising when you consider how top-heavy most of these alleged bikers are. In fact, it's wonder they can even stand up, so disproportionately large are their bonces in comparison to their bods — they make the Mister Men look like toothpicks.

Nevertheless, when you've stopped laughing, these are the lads whom you have to beat in order to stay alive. And, though they may be a scream to look at, they're pretty tough to better in hand-to-hand combat.

Hand-to-hand, incidentally, is all we're talking about here. You square up to your foe in a traditional boxing pose, and, with a small yard by way of a ring, you take him on with just your two fists — no flying or roundhouse kicks here, matey, this is Queensbury Rules. Or at least it is for you — your opponents are not adverse to playing dirty.

The villains ranged along the top of the screen comprise a motley assortment of spivs, sumo wrestlers, street surgeons and sorcerers. One by one they are ordered to take you on on this dusty field of combat. They're not especially fair-minded, these boys, and you'll find your concentration being distracted — or worse — in mid-bout by sticks of dynamite and barrels lobbed in by these unsporting louts.

Your first opponent is a lean Ted type. Actually, he's your first two opponents — either that or he's got an identical twin also in the gang. Buttons represent left and right fists, and a joystick allows you to weave about the car-park (or wherever it is that you've chosen to take on these comical but deadly thugs). Energy bars are situated at the bottom of the screen, and the first one whose energy is reduced to zero loses. The punching is pretty fast and furious on both sides, with each hit marked by a graphic Batman-style impact flash. The trick is to put together long flurries of hits, literally rocking your foe back on his heels and causing massive depletion in his energy level. You may even succeed in putting him down for a count, which is gleefully conducted by a weasley bloke with a Rett Butler moustache.



Your compere for the show.



Kageki gets in a rabbit punch.



That should wipe the grin off his face.

Of course, the same thing can happen to you too. A knock down won't usually be fatal the first time, but two or three is about your limit. Assuming you do it to him first, a scowling man in a hideous yellow smoking jacket picks up your defeated opponent and drops him down a convenient manhole!

Round Two is more of the same, with the mysteriously reincarnated/cloned Ted once more putting you through your paces. Round Three pits you against a grinning tumbler in a garish jump suit who bounds out of range from time to time, making him more difficult to punch. Then there's the sinister "dentist" with a little white medical mask over his features and a lethal blade in his hands; the fat sumo wrestler, the ball-and-chain swinger and, finally, the mysterious white-clad biker boss himself (looks more like a contemplative monk than a Hell's Angel, but don't let that fool you).

Timing takes a lot of practise in *Kageki*, but if you get it right you can start dealing out the super-weakening direct hits on your opponents' chins, which, apart from producing a deeply satisfying "crump" sound, also drastically shortens their life span.

But it's the superb, almost cartoon quality, graphics and the many little comic touches that make *Kageki* special, rather than any particularly innovative gameplay. Just watch the expression of surprise on the dentist's face as you sock his mask back, or the fidgeting restless row of onlooking thugs, just waiting their turn. A must for all those who find themselves bored by dour aliens.

Nick Kelly

GRAPHICS:	9
SOUND:	7
TOUGHNESS:	8
ENDURANCE:	8
VALUE:	8
OVERALL:	8

KONAMI 2 x 10p

VULCAN VENTURE

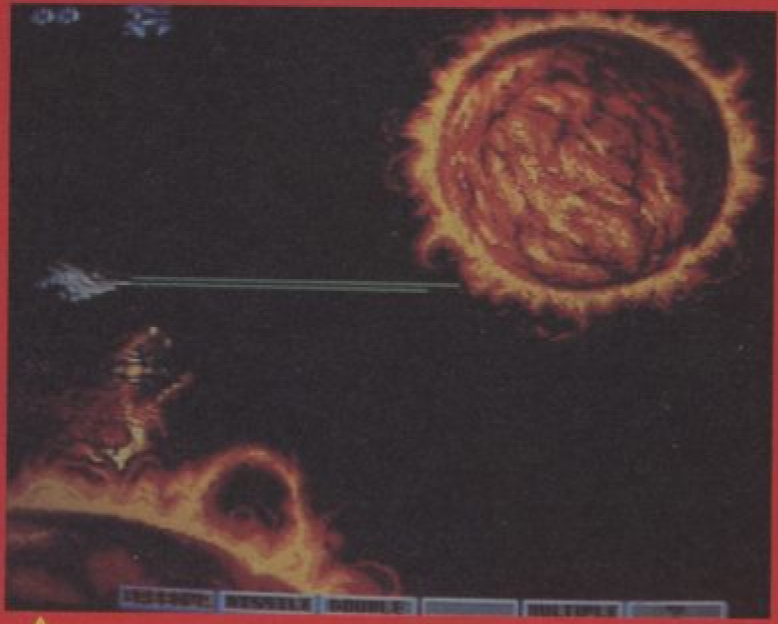
It may be called *Vulcan Venture*, but the introductory screens to this Konami coin-op don't leave you in any doubt about what you're really playing. An enormous "1985" flashes up on the screen, followed by a couple of sepia-toned screens depicting that granddaddy of the progressive horizontally-scrolling shoot 'em up, *Nemesis*. Then it's "1986", and a similar representation of *Salamander*. Finally, "1988" comes up, and, in full glorious technicolour, you're introduced to *VV*. Same company, same game concept and same ship, yup, this, ladeez 'n' gen'l'mun really is *Nemesis III*.

Nemesis and its two-player, enhanced sequel broke new ice in the arcades. They established the now obligatory extra weapons feature, and were graphically a cut above anything that had gone before. And they were hugely playable into the bargain.

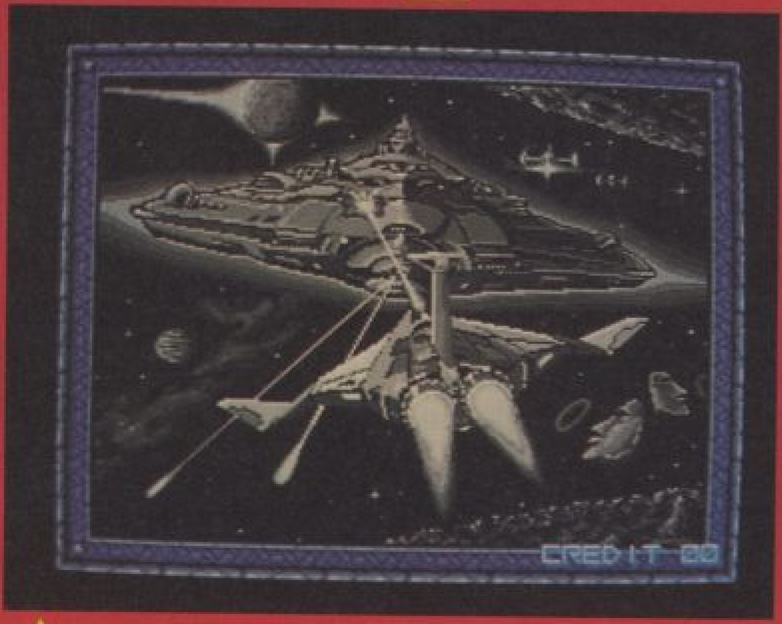
But since then we've seen *R-Type*, which, it's generally agreed, has become the standard in progressive shoot 'em up action against which all other examples of the genre are automatically compared.

So how does this latest in the *Nemesis* lineage stack up?

Well, you start out by deciding between four different extra weapon sequences, and two different shields. *Vulcan Venture* has the same "specials bar" and "activate button" as its predecessors. To the uninitiated, what this means is that the five weapons in your chosen extra weapon sequence are displayed at the foot of the screen, each one being represented by a box. Every time you take out a wave of aliens, or certain selected special aliens, an icon pops up on the screen. Fly over the icon and you're entitled to a special weapon. But until you press the "activate button", the special weapon you've earned doesn't come into effect. The specials bar's five boxes fill up one at a time, one box for every icon acquired. If you press the activate



Steer through the fire maze.



What Daddy did in the war.



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The ghost in the machine.

ARCA

ADES

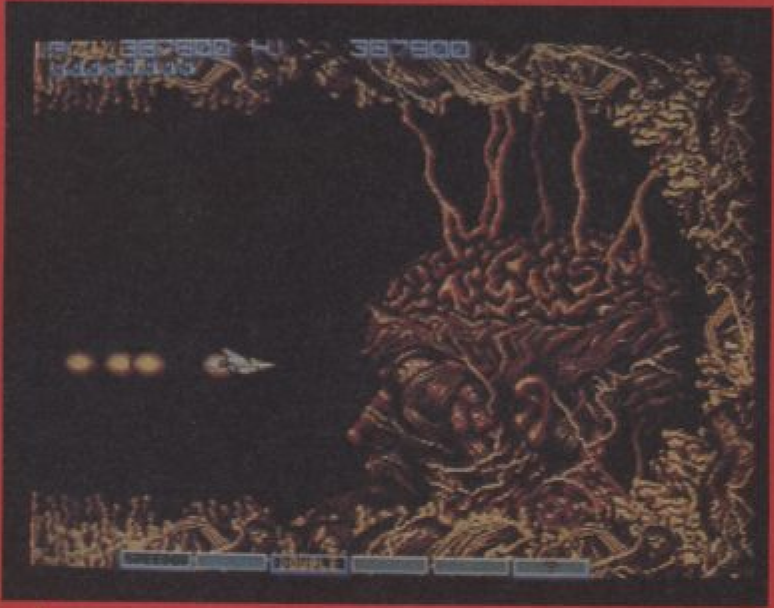
GRAPHICS:	9
SOUND:	6
TOUGHNESS:	8
ENDURANCE:	8
VALUE:	8
OVERALL:	8



Take on the Firebird (? — Ed).

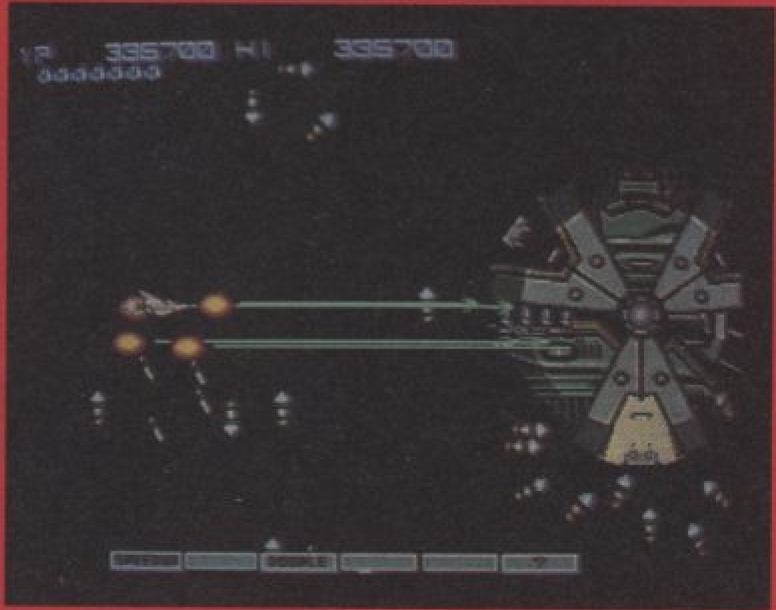


ent.



Get a head.

Adventures on the wheels of steel.



button when you've got just one icon, you get the first enhancement (speed-up), if you hold out until you've got two boxes lit up you get the next enhancement in the sequence and so on. Each time you activate an enhancement, the specials bar drops back to empty, and you've got to pick up more icons to get further enhancements. You can carry different enhancements simultaneously, and you can also build up the power of any enhancements that you particularly fancy by repeatedly filling up the specials bar to that feature's level before activating.

There are a few initial waves of nippy, but not especially devious aliens to take out, then some rather nastier Venturer-seeking ships, some of whom have the tell-tale icon-carrying orange glow.

Pick up a couple of speed-ups and one of *Vulcan Venture's* innovations comes seriously into play: multi-directional scrolling. That screen starts to move *fast*, as your hapless ship jerks about the galactic wasteland avoiding aliens.

The scene becomes cluttered with fiery planets through which you've got to thread your way. Enormous flaming serpents and phoenixes emerge snarling from the planet surfaces, and attempt to incinerate you before reluctantly dropping back into the lava.

As you proceed through the levels, the backgrounds, and enemies, become ever more complex and dangerous. You soon realise that those special weapons aren't just there for a laugh. Huge crystals come at you in waves, and mazes with continually opening/shutting gateways have to be negotiated at speed, blasting any aliens along the way.

But it's with the now-obligatory super-aliens at the end of each level — and the mini-super-As which crop up in between — that *Vulcan Venture*'s graphics really shine: huge metallic starfish, flaming eagles, robotic crustaceans and even a gruesome human head, covered in a network of blood vessels or Virginia Creeper (I'm not quite sure which is more horrifying) have to be taken on and defeated head-to-head.

There's a reasonable soundtrack pumping out through stereo speakers but I can't say I was too impressed with the digitised speech, which makes a barely audible effort to identify each new feature that you activate. In fact the only word I thought I could hear clearly was, whenever your ship is destroyed, an exasperated "crap"! Of course, I'm no doubt mistaken.

While its overall playability doesn't quite come up to the standard laid down by *R-Type* — though to be fair, that standard was a phenomenal one — *Vulcan Venture* does represent a marked development from its predecessors, both graphically and in terms of the multi-directional scrolling and choice-of-specials features. Plus it's at least as much fun to play. All in all, a very worthy sequel.

Nick Kelly

ADES

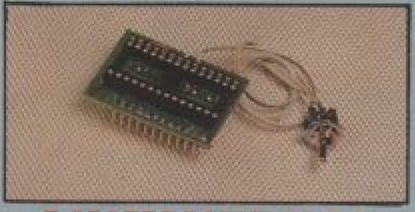
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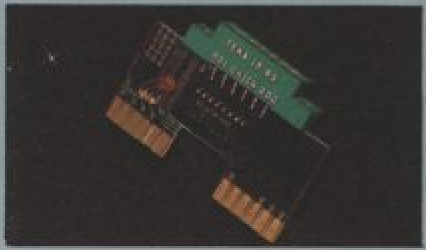


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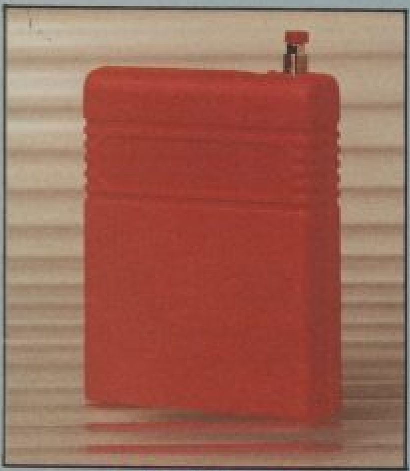
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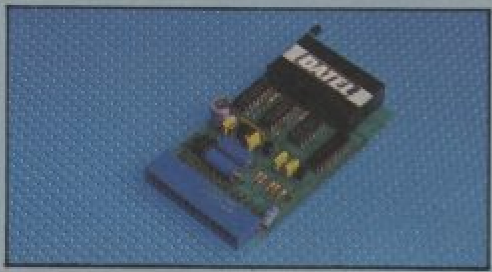
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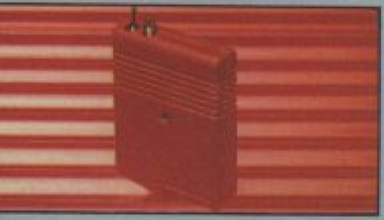
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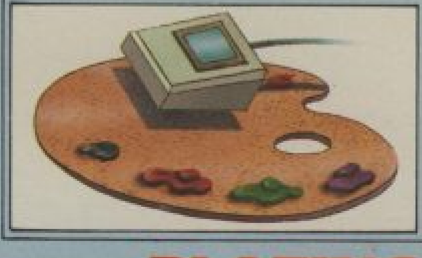
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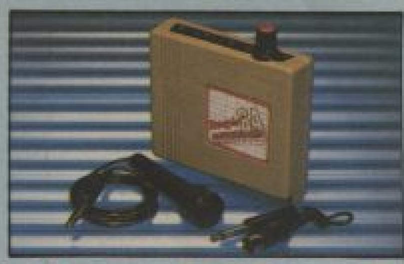
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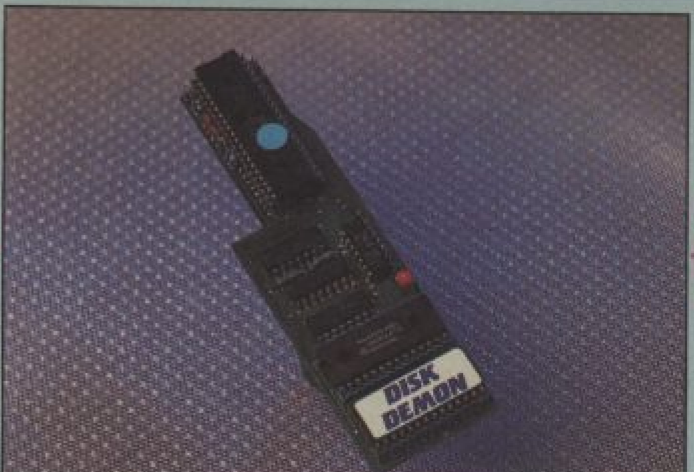
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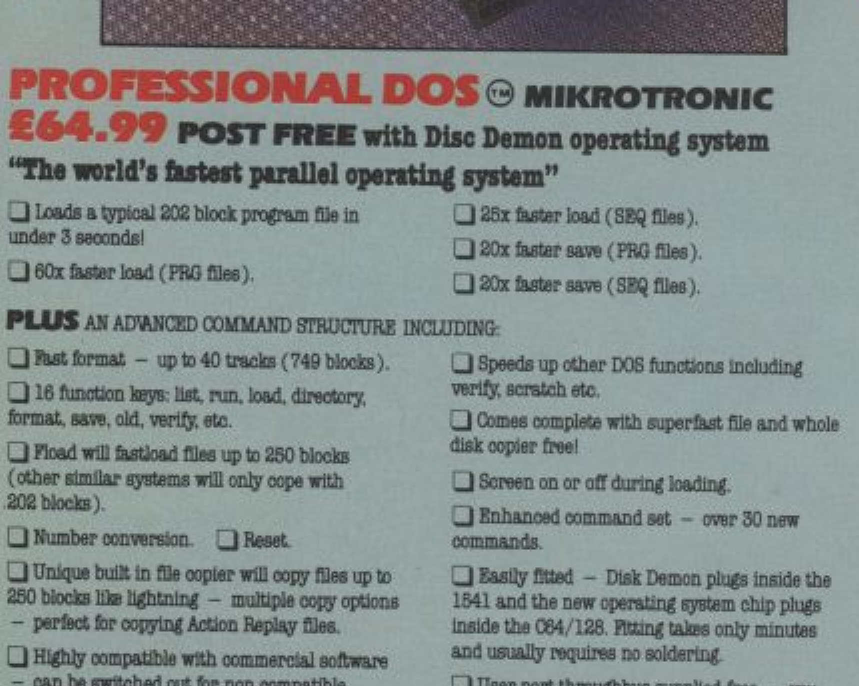
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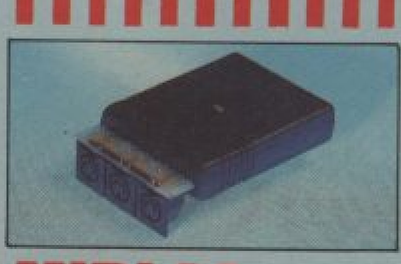


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Naturally you'll be getting your usual dose of Play To Win tips from Gaz, loads of hot reviews, previews, news and the best Amiga coverage money can buy. Oh, and belay yourselves for the second part of our in-depth look at games piracy.

Can you think of anything better to spend a quid 'n' ten-pence on?

CU NEXT MONTH

MONTH

Tommy's Tips



"Mmm . . . Maybe I should have asked for the latest tape head cleaner

Printers again

I have a C128 + 1571 disk drive and want to buy a good printer and word processor package. I want the printer to have LQ or NLQ capability. I have been looking at the star NC10, the Citizen 120D and the Seikosha printers — what do you think? Do you think an 80 column word processor is necessary for normal letter writing and which packages would you recommend?

I would very much appreciate your comments as the printer market seems to be a bit of a jungle, and the local shop only want to flog whatever model they stock!
Andrew Goodberry,
Holmer Green,
Bucks

I was inundated with queries on printers and monitors this month, 90% of the queries received being on these two subjects. The choice of a printer is very much personal taste, depending on your main use for it. For word-processing, print quality and speed are important criteria, while the second thing to look for is whether the manufacturers do a model which includes a Commodore interface, thus saving the £25 — £80 a separate interface would cost. I have to admit to a personal fondness for the STAR range of printers. I use a STAR NB24-10, but the 9-pin printers such as the NC-10 are equally good, just a bit slower and with only marginally reduced print quality compared to their 24-pin brothers.

As far as recommending a suitable word-processor for the 128 is concerned, you don't mention what sort of TV or monitor you are using. If you are using a normal TV then 80 colunmns will be very difficult to read, and if you only have a monitor on the 40-column output then that is what you are stuck with. However, if you have a choice then you should go for an 80-column one. It is possible to get by with a 60 or even 40 column screen, but once you have tried an 80-column WP program you won't ever want to go back again! It might even be worth buying an 80-column monochrome monitor just to use for word-processing.

As for the WP program, again I have to admit to a personal bias; *Vizawrite*. I used the 64 version for many years then switched to the 128 version as soon as it appeared. If you only have a 40-column screen then go for the C64 cartridge version with instant start-up (the 128 version needs an 80-column screen attached to the RGBI port). I have tried (and reviewed) many others and always return to *Vizawrite* as being one of the easiest to use. However, other people will be equally quick to point out the merits of their own favourite WP package so once again, it's horses for courses.

Viva Amiga

I am a regular reader of your monthly column in Commodore User and very grateful to you for highlighting those rough topics we face in our daily work with computers.

I have upgraded up to an Amiga 500 recently. Although I have been racking my brains trying to find out how to program the ten function keys, I have been unable to succeed in doing it. So I wonder whether you can help me out by writing and publishing a program thereof in your column in the coming months.

Moreover, I have read in the last January issue about several firms in your country that sell software and literature for the Amiga computer, but you did not state the addresses thereof blocking out this important information for people living outside your country.
Mr Quinicas,
Huelua,
Spain

There are so many ways of accessing the Amiga keyboard, depending on the type of input required and under various circumstances of windows, workbench etc, that no single routine could possibly do justice to the problem. The normal keyboard input is 'sanitised' to present a standard ASCII input to the program, but it is possible to design your own keyboard table as well as to get the 'raw' keyboard input. A very good book which covers the subject is 'The Kickstart Guide to the Amiga', published by Ariadne Software Ltd, 273 Kensal Rd, London, W10 5DB. Cost is normally £12-95, but you should check on costs for overseas postage. Silica Shop address is 1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Rd, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 4DX. Computer Manuals Ltd are at 30 Lincoln Road, Olton, Birmingham, B27 6PA.

Whiz idea

I am thinking of buying an Amiga and I would like to know whether I can use my Fidelity CTM 1400 colour television/monitor with it. If I can, would it give me high resolution (7800 pixels)? This television comes with a 21 pin Euroconnector.

Secondly I have seen an advert for a cartridge called Whizzard which allows a Commodore 64/128 to use a video recorder as an alternative to a disk drive. Could you tell me how this amazing invention works, whether it is possible for me to make a load which connects to the cassette port, and into the audio-in of a video recorder and finally whether the Whizzard is available for the Amiga.
Mark Jones,
Old Town,
Eastbourne

The good news is that you should be able to obtain a suitable lead for your Fidelity monitor for use with the Amiga from TRILOGIC. Prices are from £10-£95 all incl. Tel No is 0274 684289, address is 29 Holme Lane, Bradford, BD4 0QA; do enclose an SAE if you write for information though. The bad news is that I doubt your Fidelity is a true hi-res colour monitor; more probably medium resolution. This means that you will still be able to display the 640 × 200 standard graphics quite happily, and even the 640 × 400 interlace mode (albeit with the usual 'shiver'). The manual with your monitor should give the resolution; if not any Fidelity dealer



should be able to tell you.

Your query on the 'Whizzard' raises some interesting issues. Firsty, I am not aware of any version that works with the Amiga. Secondly, it is not true to say that any system based on a video recorder is an alternative to a disk drive. The reason is that it is a serial device, just like the Commodore datacassettte recorder and it suffers from exactly the same drawbacks. A two hour video tape STILL takes two hours to play back whether it is attached to a TV or a computer! Its only advantage is one of volume; you can store one hell of a lot of programs and data files on one video tape. As such it is useful for large archive (backup) purposes, but as a suitable device for storing programs for regular use, forget it.

Printers

● This letter concerns information about colour printers, since I know almost virtually nothing about printer jargon. The printers I have in mind are the STAR NL-10 and LC-10, the OLIVETTI DM105 and the OKIMATE 20. The first thing I wish to know is, are all of these printers compatible, graphics wise with the Amiga 500. You may wonder why I mentioned the STAR NL-10 since this is not a colour printer. Well I have heard that the new STAR LC-10 comes with a colour option, so due to the similarities between the two machines I put two and two together (probably getting five).

Now for the printer jargon/hype; can you tell me the difference between a 9-pin dot matrix printer and the 24-pin variation. Also, does 240 dots per inch graphic resolution actually mean what it states?

Finally the toughie; if you had to pick between the printers I have mentioned, which one in your opinion would be value for money. I would be very grateful if you could answer these queries, for I am deciding to purchase a printer for colour-graphic capabilities for my Amiga.
Simon Lee,
Pittington
Co. Durham

There are only a few colour printer types which have drivers in the Amiga, but any pritner which has EPSON JX-80 emulation can be used quite happily.

The OKIMATE-20 has its own driver and works extremly well, producing very good colour graphics from the Amiga; it has the advantage of being one of the cheapest colour printers as well. However, it is let down by its slow speed and the fact that it is not really all that good for text compared to most of the other NLQ dot-matrix printers now on the market.

The Star NL-10 is certainly an excellent printer, and since this works happily using the EPSON FX-80 driver, I have no doubt that the colour version will emulate the JX-80, but do check this before you buy. It really depends what you are going to be doing most of; colour graphics or letter writing. If the latter then I would recommend the STAR printer; these are good value for money, reliable and produce good quality text, plus adequate colour prints.

The OKIMATE-20 is better for pictures, being a thermal transfer printer, but at the expense of text quality. Do note that ribbons will get used up very quickly on the OKI and they are strictly 'one-time' use.

As for the difference between 9-pin and 24-pin printers, this gives the number of pins in the print head. The more pin strikes used to make up a character, the more they can overlap to give a 'filled-in' appearance to the characters, thus improving the quality. This can be done in a single pass on a 24-pin machine, resulting in greater speed than a 9-pin machine which may have to do two or even three passes to achieve the same effect. When asking if 240 × 240 resolution means what it says the answer is YES . . . and NO! Yes, the printer may be capable of producing that resolution and No, the software you are using to drive it may not!

Mon Cub

● I own an Amiga 500 and a Microvitec Cub colour monitor which I used to use with a BBC Micro. I had a cable made up to go between the Amiga and the Cub as the previous monitor cable was incompatible with the Amiga. This arrangement works fine on programmes such as *Deluxe Paint* and *Space Ranger*, but when playing *Defender of the Crown*, although a few screens reproduce in full colour, some leave out almost all of the colours, particularly in the background so that the figures look rather like stick men. The game plays perfectly on a normal colour television. I am at a loss to explain this phenomenon and would appreciate your advice. Furthermore, could you advise me on how to connect my Brother HR15 daisy wheel printer to the Amiga.
M.R. David,
Fulham SW6

I suspect the problem is that you are using a digital RGB monitor, whereas the Amiga produces an analogue RGB signal. In practice this means that while the Amiga is capable of producing a range of 4096 colours, your monitor is only capable of displaying the eight major colours (or possibly 16 if it is RGBI). Thus if the Amiga is using a range of colours within the scope of a single colour (eg: lots of shades of red) then your monitor displays them as all the same colour, with disastrous results. A TV on the other hand is using the UHF signal and can therefore display all the colours, albeit to a lower resolution than a dedicated hi-res monitor.

As for the printer, it connects to the normal parallel port using a cable with a 25-way D-plug at the computer end and a standard Centronics connector at the printer end (assuming the printer has a Centronics interface fitted); you can get one of these at your local dealer. On the Amiga you will need to set the printer option correctly using 'Preferences'; select the BROTHER HR-15XL option in the Custom Printer Box.

Compatibility

● I am buying the Amiga, I have a Star LC-10C printer and a 1901 monitor. Can I still use them on the Amiga 500? It's not the printer I am too worried about.
S.R. Hope,
Canterbury

The 1901 can be physically altered so that you can obtain the full benefit of using it with the Amiga. If you don't get it altered then you will be limited to 16 colours and a very much poorer quality picture. The company to contact are TRILOGIC (address and tel. no. in another of this months answers) who will charge £29-95 which includes carriage. You must send the monitor to them by insured post (or DATAPOST) and expect to get it back about 10 days later.

As for the printer, I suspect the 'C' after the model number indicates it has a Commodore interface. The Amiga uses a standard Centronics interface so you should check with STAR to see if it can be converted back to a normal parallel printer.

TOMMY'S TIPS


Groovy Arcade Stories
BACK AGAIN KIDS, TO THE FABLED ARCADE AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE, AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE EXPECTING TO SEE OUR DYNAMIC DUO SPLATTERED ALL OVER THE FLOOR OF THE ARCADE, I'M AFRAID TO SAY TOUGH LUCK SUCKERS! BECAUSE LIKE ALL GOOD COMIC CHARACTERS OUR FAB TWO SURVIVED THEIR HEADLONG COLLISION WITH DAISY'S OUT OF CONTROL ROCKET SHIP! SURPRISED!? IF YOU ARE I SUGGEST YOU READ MORE COMICS IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME!..........
AH MY HEAD!
WOW! WOULD YOU TAKE A LOOK AT ALL THIS CARNAGE THAT GIRLY MANAGED TO TAKE OUT ALL THE ARCADE POLICE MEN, AND LEAVE US STANDING — WITHOUT A SCRATCH!
STUNNING!
HEY LADY! THANKS FOR YOUR HELP, MAYBE ME AND MY BUDDY ELVIS CAN BUY YOU A BEER?....
D.F.X
ELVIS?
ELVIS...?
ELVIS!
OHMYGOD DAISY!☆?
ELVIS! IT IS YOU! YOU DIRTY.... DOUBLE CROSSING, FLEABAG, SCUMHEAD, DIRTBALL UNFAITHFUL MONEY GRABBING, LECHEROUS UNROMANTIC BRAIN DEAD BACTERIA ON THE ARMPIT OF SOCIETY.......COME HERE!!
JAMIE HUGE 88 YAK YAK!
WHAT EXACTLY HAVE YOU DONE TO UPSET THIS WONDERFUL WOMAN?
YIKES RUN IAN... RUN!
NOTHING...WE JUST GOT MARRIED!
HOW CAN YOU BE SO BLASÉ ABOUT SOMETHING AS IMPORTANT AS MARRIAGE....
DUCK WORLD ★ ITS FAB
WA!
SHUT YA GOB, AND KEEP RUNNING, C'MON DOWN THIS ALLEYWAY, ROUND THIS BEND!, OVER THIS TURNSTILE.......
DOWN THIS DEADEND!?
AH THE INFAMOUS IAN AND ELVIS, WE MEET AT LAST! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. I AM TOMMY WEIGHTS, AND YOU ARE UNDER ARREST!......
YA!
NEXT: TOMMY WEIGHT!
VIVA HATE



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It's every prison warden's nightmare – the inmates have broken out. These men are hardened criminals, armed to the hilt and aren't afraid to gun you all down. Just move in, knock 'em down and round 'em up. Easy!
GREEN BERET
RESCUE THE CAPTIVES! You are a highly trained combat machine. Your mission; infiltrate all four enemy Strategic Defence Installations – alone, against immeasurable odds.
Eight more deadly opponents to combat as you advance to become a black-belt master. Authentic fighting moves with 4 different locations.
Konami
Shao-lin's Road
Our hero has finally mastered the secret martial art "CHIN'S SHAO-LIN" but is trapped by triad gangs. With kicks and other secret powers, escape from and travel SHAO-LIN'S road to freedom!
NEMESIS
The planet Nemesis, is now under an all-out space attack beings from the sub-space star cluster of Bacterion. You will need all your courage and concentration to win. Get ready to blast off!
HYPER SPORTS
Continuing the challenge where 'TRACK and FIELD' left off. Archery, Skeet Shooting and Weight Lifting are just some of the featured events to test your skill and stamina.
You can almost feel the tension of the big match breaking through the screen . . . the expectant crowd is almost on top of you! You return the service with a Top-spin Backhand, then a Forehand Back-spin, the ball bounces high from your opponent's looping, defensive lob . . . SMASH! . . . a great shot opens the score . . .
PING PONG
JACKAL
Get into this and you'll never get out . . . The plan – codename JACKAL – is to drop a squad of 4 crack troops behind enemy lines. Rescue a group of prisoners and whilst under attack, deliver them to helipads. Their final objective is to knockout enemy headquarters. Simple eh?
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